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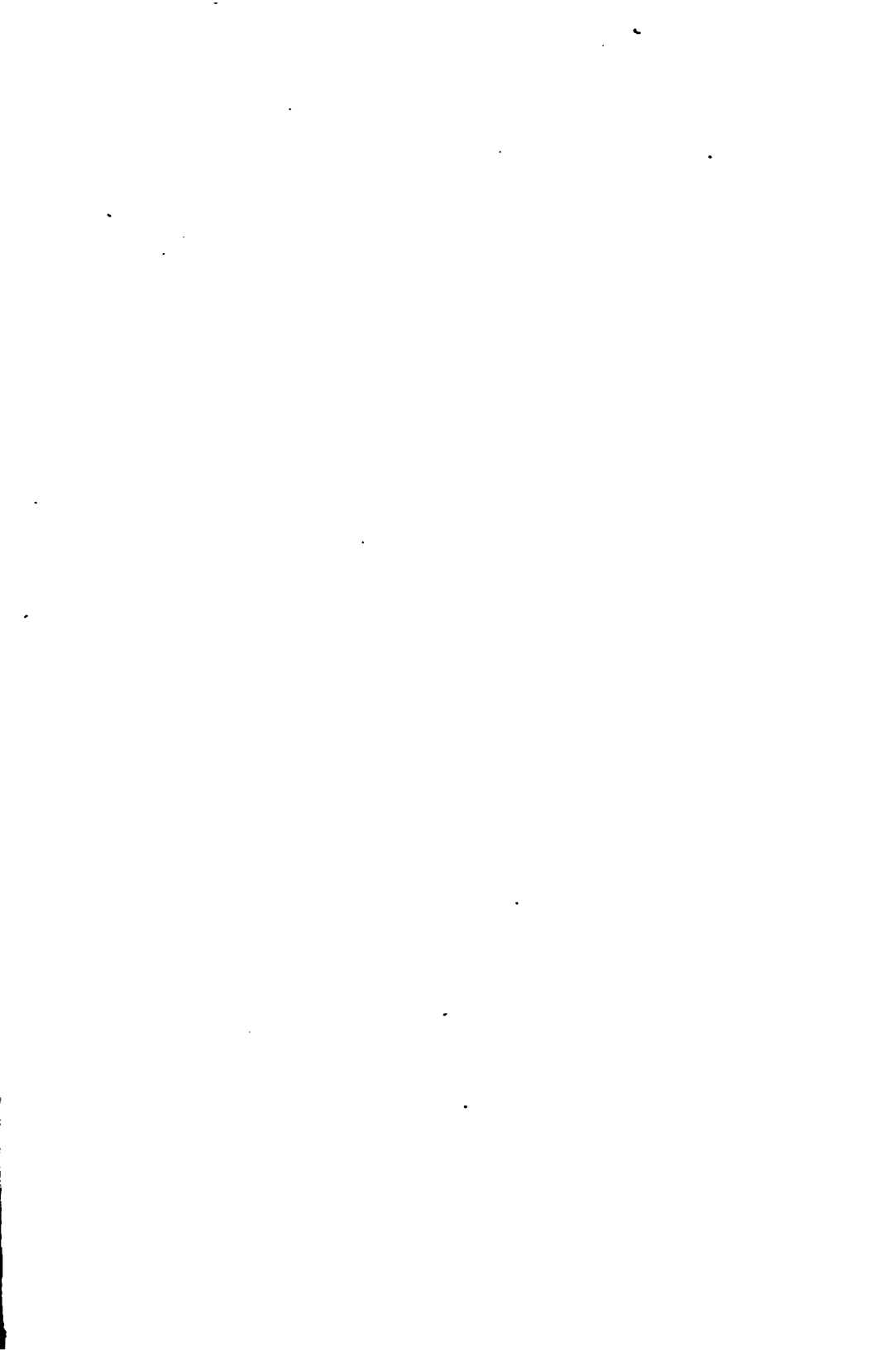
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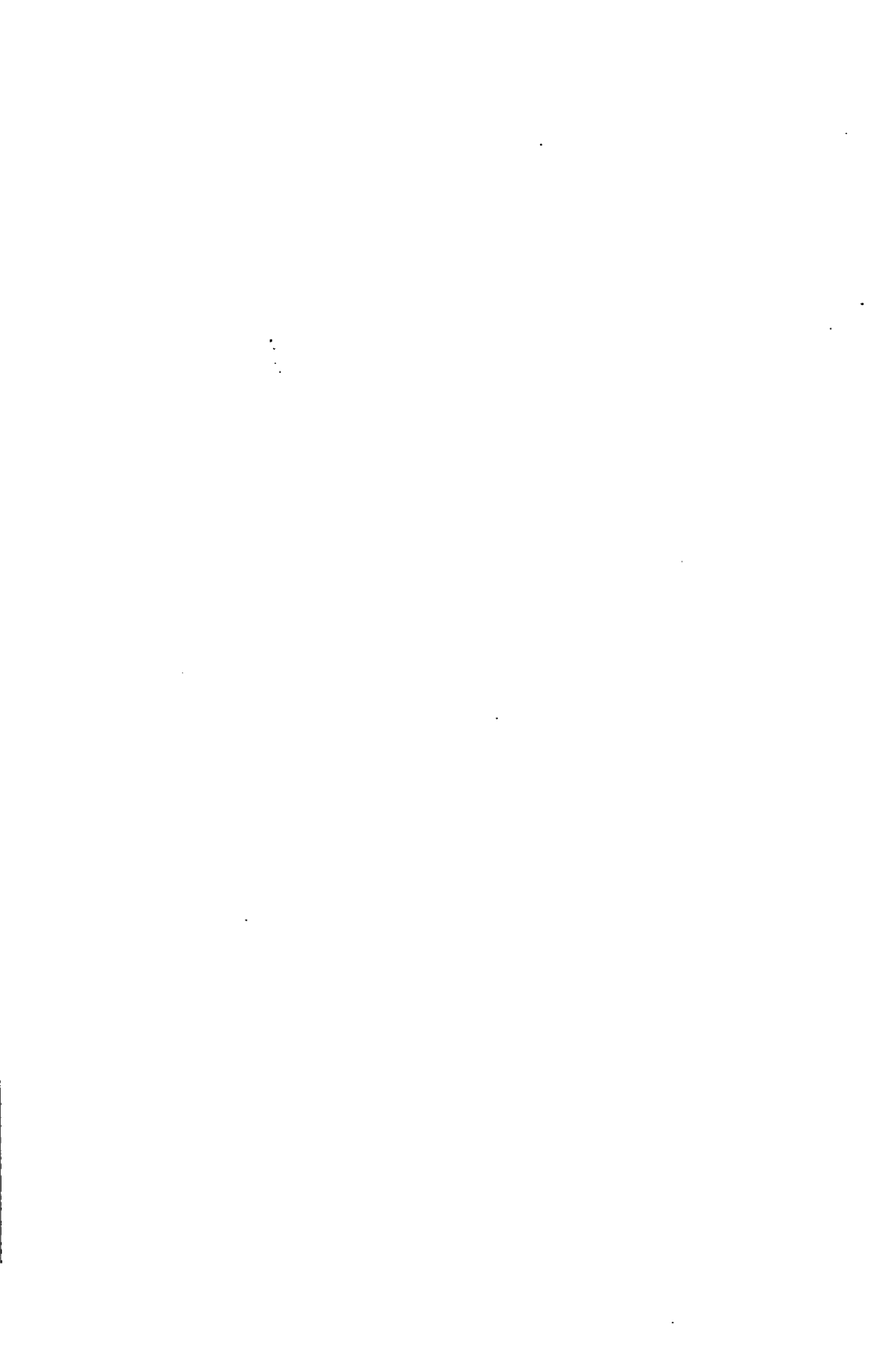
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**The Globular Jottings
of Griselda**



Univ. of
California

TO THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL



SMASH!

The Globular Jottings of Griselda

BY

E. DOUGLAS HUME

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MCMVII

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ABSTRACT

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The Globular Jottings of Griselda.

CHAPTER I.

VIA CHICAGO, SAINT PAUL, AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS TO VANCOUVER.

"Go Joseph Malay Peninsula via Pacific next steamer" I read, and stared blankly at the cablegram with its telegraphic disregard of capitals.

The weather was really too hot for such a summary order. In the garden bright humming-birds were flitting from flower to flower. The sun blazed and the sky was cloudless. It was the month of June, and at Hamilton, in the province of Ontario, Canada was proving her right to her summer title of "Lady of the Sunshine."

I, Griselda, of the Irish branch of the Marches, having left school and accomplished what, once upon a time, was known as "the Grand Tour" in Europe, had been receiving the Transatlantic finish proper to an up-to-date education by spending a year with friends in the New World. I was just contemplating my return to the old country when this most unexpected cablegram was thrust into my hands. It sounded quite Scriptural

to be told to go to Joseph, but the reason for the mandate was incomprehensible. Was he ill, or threatened by marriage or some other disaster? I had not the remotest idea. I was simply told to go to Joseph, so I just made haste and went. Joseph, I may mention, is my brother in the Civil Service—one of the “heaven born” of the Federated Malay States.

I had a long way to go to get to him, but, fortunately, I had time to break my journey with friends. Chicago was the first stop. I reached it after a night and day in the train. I was the only woman in the car, and the kindness of the other passengers was overpowering. Every one wished to pay for my meals, and I was offered free railway passes in such profusion that if only I had been in the habit of starting without a ticket I might have travelled most economically.

The couple of days at Chicago were spent conscientiously in viewing the sights. They appeared to consist chiefly of millionaires' houses. I was specially interested in one, the owner of which, I was told, had made his fortune in pea-nuts,—it seemed so simple to sell them at a street corner that I wondered whether I might not succeed equally well. But life is full of disillusion. I subsequently understood that much more complicated methods had to be employed. The creation of a neighbour's wants has to be the fortune-hunter's prelude to ministering to them. Of course I was taken to the Corn Exchange, where I beheld a whirling mass of excited men crawling over each other's backs. They were said to be having a very quiet day.

That same afternoon I continued my journey, surrounded by supplies of books, fruit, flowers, candies, and anything else my hostess fancied I might like. I had only known her a very short time, but then, as I had already discovered, the treatment of guests in America approaches the ideal. I was glad when

the negro porter made up the beds for the night, as I anticipated being up early next morning to change trains at St Paul. However, when the sun rose, and I blinked out sleepily at a huge expanse of water, the negro poked his head through my curtains.

"Guess yo' needn't get a hustle on," he drawled. "There's washouts all 'lon' line. We don't make Saint Paul on time."

Then I realised that the train was picking its way very cautiously, and that the Mississippi had a swollen body, for she was bulging with water over and above her own wide limits, and the railway lines seemed to be learning to swim.

Presently the porter reappeared. "Guess you'll be wantin' all yo' time," he said. "We're at the breakfastin' station in twenty minutes. It'll be yo' only chance for a meal. We've to go right 'lon' through Iowa to make Saint Paul." The whole accent is placed on the "Saint" in the local lingo of those parts.

The breakfasting station was quite unprepared to breakfast an unexpected train-load of people. There was a tremendous clattering of knives and forks but a depressing scarcity of edibles. It was disappointing to have to return to the train as hungry as when one had left it, and spend a long wearisome morning. The porter was sympathetic. "Feelin' lonesome?" he came and inquired at intervals, and took me excursions through the train by way of passing the time. At different stations we received fragments of news as to what had really happened. A terrific tornado had made havoc in the neighbourhood. The banks of the Mississippi had been washed away in many places, and endless bridges had been destroyed.

At last, hours and hours late, our train crept into St Paul. At the same moment a luggage-train drew up at the opposite platform. It would take a lifetime

to forget the sight of its gruesome freight. The trucks were laden with stretchers; and as the wind blew aside their white coverings one saw faces blanched in death, rigid in agony, or absolutely battered out of all shape. Beside these half-hidden remains clustered men and women and children, many only half dressed, and all more or less maimed and disfigured. Nurses and doctors hurried up, and a crowd of agonised inquirers rushed through the station, some hailing living friends with happy tears, others bursting into wild grief as they found their worst fears realised. All the pent-up misery of life confronted one in grim horror. It was a moment when terror entered the soul and one quailed before dread existence in an inexplicable universe. To say the least of it, I was startled by hearing my own name shouted above all the noise and excitement. "Miss Griselda—Miss Griselda—Miss Griselda March!" It was not a voice from the clouds, however, as I was half inclined to imagine, but apparently issued from a little one-armed man who stood at the end of the platform swinging a ponderous bell in his only hand. I walked up to him and said, "That's my name;" and, indeed, no other explanation seemed necessary, for he appeared to know more about me than I did about myself.

"Guess you've missed your connection," he stated. "You don't get no train on to-night."

"What has happened?" I asked. "Where do those poor creatures come from?"

"From New Richmond. They heard a noise like a dozen express trains coming slick upon 'em, and in five minutes the entire town lay flat like a pack of cards. Hundreds were killed and injured,—I guess pretty near all the inhabitants, except a small few who got down to their cellars. In these tornado parts the houses are made with cellars under them, but a tornado don't allow much time for getting anywhere. Any friends here?"

"No ; none at all."

"Guess I'll have to take care of you then. My name's Zinzindorf. I'm the C.P.R. agent. I was wired to see you make your connection. I've seen you lose it instead. Want to put up at an hotel?"

"Please ; but not a very expensive one," I added, remembering the luxurious places to which my friends had taken me, and afraid that my funds might run short if many such unexpected demands were made upon them.

"Wull," said the little man meditatively, "I guess Bill Sherman's 'll do. Bill's a friend of mine, so I can trust him to look after you."

He deposited my rugs, &c., in safety, and possessed himself of my travelling-bag, his one arm doing the duty of ten. My mind was so full of the misery at the station that I did not notice the poor looking locality through which I was piloted. My guide continued to pour out recommendations. "Bill Sherman's a good chap. I've known him intimately, and you can get a bath there," he announced, as though bathing were a luxury and quite unusual.

In a short time I found myself introduced to Bill.

"I'll come back in an hour," said the C.P.R. agent, while I surveyed Bill, a portly person with red hair and a florid face.

"Ought I to keep my bag locked up?" I inquired, as I was shown into a bare-looking room.

"I guess so, and yerself too," he answered, in a most inspiring tone of voice.

I gazed out of the window, but could see no sign of any more appropriate quarters, and I could not very well ask Bill to advise me where else to go. I decided that I had better make the best of things, and inquired the way to the bathroom. A dishevelled little boy escorted me. He apparently did duty as page. The

door would not lock, so I asked him to keep guard outside. He deserted his post at once, but it did not matter, for bathing was impossible after one look at the jaundiced complexion of that bath. My toilet was unavoidably hurried, and having completed it I sat down disconsolately on the only chair which my apartment possessed. Outside a gale was blowing; there were squalls of rain occasionally; thunder rumbled and lightning flashed. Suddenly some one knocked at the door, and, without waiting for an answer, the C.P.R. agent marched in.

"I've come to take you to see the Falls of Minnehaha," he announced, without removing a very rank cigar which he held between his teeth. "May be you've heard tell of our great poet Longfellow," he continued, and sat himself down on the bed. "Wull, these are the Falls that he yarned about, and if you travel over the five Continents you'll never meet the comparison of such a sight. If you miss this opportunity it won't repeat itself. Good luck knows more'n to get the ha-ha to the face. I shouldn't be undertaking my dooty if I allowed you to pass Saint Paul and miss the spectacle of the world. If you're like me you'll like doing a thing thorough. I'll take you under the Falls and up to the fort. We'll have supper there, and I'll get you back between ten and eleven o'clock."

"Thanks," I said; "but I'm afraid it's too wet and stormy to go out."

"That's so, but I've a closed carriage waiting. You can be as snug as a bug in a rug."

"Thanks," I said again; "but you see I don't want to spend money unnecessarily."

"It won't cost you a red cent. I'll put it down in expenses. The C.P.R. want you to have a good time. They want all their passengers to have a good time.

And I want you to have a good time, because my only sister's Canadian husband had an English father and a pure Irish mother, so I want you to have a good time."

"That's very kind of you," I said, "but I'm afraid I must be busy this evening and write some letters."

The little man got up from the bed, to my relief, but only to stride across the room and face me majestically. "I know what you're thinking,—you don't know who my relations are. That's so. You don't know who my relations are, and I don't know who your relations are, but as I know you for a lady, you can take me for a gem'man,—that's the way of the world between strangers. I'm Pennsylvania Dutch, though I couldn't speak a word of the lingo to save my life. I'm aware there's no advantage arguing with a Cannuck, still less with an Old Country Britisher; but, you know, you'll be safe with me under the Falls."

I was not given much opportunity for argument, but I timed the interview by my watch. A whole hour was exhausted before it ended. I should have loved to see the Falls of Minnehaha, but to be under them with that bad tobacco was more than I could bear. Besides, I felt sure my family would not have approved of such an expedition, and my mind, like many other people's, was inclined to try and follow the opinions of other minds, though it never succeeded, instead of cultivating decisions of its own. Mr Zinzendorf drew a most pitiable picture of a solitary evening, and then offered to come at seven o'clock and take me for a walk.

"I'm afraid that would be rather late," I said.

"No doubt," he answered, with great sarcasm, "you'll have retired to rest long before that," and thereupon stalked out of the room with offended dignity, relegating the Falls of Minnehaha to the category of lost

opportunities. He was right; it was a pity to have missed them, and he meant to be so kind.

I was very hungry, and succeeded in securing quite a satisfactory meal. It had left off raining, so soon after I went out in search of another hotel. I had always heard that a woman could walk about anywhere in the United States without any one taking the least notice. That evening seemed to be the exception to the rule. Most of the men in the streets turned round to look after me, and the inmates of several drinking-saloons came to the doors to stare. I was unconscious of any particular peculiarity in my appearance, but painfully conscious that I was carrying all my money in a little bag inside my dress. I thought it prudent to cut short my investigations and content myself with Bill Sherman's establishment for one night.

I had to be called at cock-crow next morning to catch my train, but the Sherman household consisted of early risers, and everybody was up. My bill came to seventy-five cents, all inclusive—a bed, two meals, to say nothing of the bath. "And it's not obligatory, but it is customary to give the bell-boy ten cents," added the youth with the dishevelled head. So my entire expenses amounted to the equivalent of about three shillings and five pence. Who maintains that it is impossible to live cheaply in the United States? I had to pay at the bar, where customers were already in evidence; and as I wanted my fountain-pen filled for use on the train, and hated doing it myself, I thought I might as well make them of use. The individual nearest me was a young man in top-boots and a slouch-hat—a typical looking Buffalo Bill. I said to him politely, "Will you please fill my fountain-pen?"

"Why, certainly, gurl," he answered. "I'll help yer all I kin."

I had never in my life been called "girl" by any

man, and was astounded by this form of address from a cow-boy. In fact, I was so astonished that I could only stare him up and down. He looked extremely puzzled, totally failed to fathom the cause of my amazement, and filled my fountain-pen. In spite of their overflow in duchesses the United States are a true democracy.

Mr Zinzindorf was at the station to see me off. He smelt stronger than ever of tobacco, and continued offended and dignified. The platforms were crammed with motley people, speaking unrecognisable languages, evidently immigrants of ambiguous nationalities. Fortunately there was not long to wait before the train came up and brought to a conclusion my first and last acquaintance with the slums of St Paul.

I had now to travel along the Sault line until it connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway at Moosejaw. I was sorry to miss the Canadian route through what might be the granary of the Empire, if the Yankees do not snap it up while Britishers are making up their minds. However, we passed through much the same sort of country—continuous prairie, bare of trees except a few planted round the buildings of what are, no doubt, to become the great cities of the future. But at that time these embryo Chicagos were mere sieves which one could see through from the train. All the same, they were full of anticipations of coming glory. Their little central alleys were regularly labelled "Main Street;" and even when they consisted of no more than a couple of shanties, those shanties seemed invariably placarded "City Hall" and "Grand Opera House." By the next day these germs of cities had dwindled considerably,—not a single tree adorned a habitation, and sometimes a township appeared to be devoid of a single house. At any rate one station consisted of a sign-board dangling from a telegraph-pole. Few and far between were the men we

passed, and of those most wore nets over their heads as a protection from the mosquitoes, which were unusually large and vicious. Here and there we saw a mud dug-out, or a heap of skulls to bear witness to the buffalo hordes that once roamed those grassy plains. After the heavy rain the train had to pursue its way very gingerly over the softened prairie. We were already five hours behind time.

"I think I shall get out and walk," I complained to the darkey porter.

"But jest think how long yo'd have to wait round for us at the next station," he observed.

At last we reached Moosejaw, the connecting point with a waiting train-load of very impatient people. In fact, half the train had gone on and taken the observation-car with it, so that we felt ourselves very badly used. Personally the observation-car was not much loss to me, as a more important item—my glasses—had failed as well. I never wear them, but only hold them up now and then on critical occasions, and yet they have a horrid habit of being broken just when they might be of use. Therefore I was not the least surprised, when day dawned in the Foot Hills, to find the wretched things positively shattered to bits. They could not have chosen a more inappropriate moment than just when the Rocky Mountains were looming into sight. Luckily Yankees are wonderfully ingenious. A man and his wife on the train actually mended them by means of a match and a toothpick and a large expenditure of thread. It took them an hour to do it, and they missed all sorts of scenic tit-bits, but declared that they did not mind. So after all I was able to gaze to my heart's content at the scenery over which the descriptive time-table provided by the railway company worked itself into such ecstasies that, on reaching the culminating-point of beauty, it found all

its adjectives exhausted, and had simply to state prosaically that "the view was very fine."

To compensate for the vanished observation-car the porter provided me with a camp-stool on the little platform at the rear end of the train. This was against rules, so would of course be pleasant, I knew. After a little while, a young American with twinkling eyes asked whether he might presume to join me, and I had to allow him to, as I could not very well lay claim to a monopoly of the panorama. I soon found myself going into scenic hysterics, like the guide-book. I was not so much impressed by the mountains as I was by the mighty gorges and cañons, the river, a thousand feet below, the bridges swinging it seemed in mid-air, the enormous glacier of the Selkirks, as large as all the combined glaciers of Switzerland. The scenes kept continually changing—from dusky crags to dazzling snows; from long-stemmed pine-forests to soft, luscious, rose-scented greenery. One grudged night-time, when such a fair world was masked; but it was glorious to wake with the sun to fresh treats of grandeur and beauty. We passed Red Indians muffled up in European clothes, and Chinese busily washing for gold in the rivers. When the train stopped, the young American risked being left behind and got down and picked me bunches of flowers. Once four men on a hand-car hitched themselves on behind us, and we made minute inquiries as to their mountain life. We could not extract a single syllable from them, and as they never interchanged a word with one another, we imagined that they must be suffering from the form of dumbness said to result from solitude. The American was most anxious to know whether their womankind had fallen victims to the same complaint, and though the men on the hand-car as usual had no answer, he insisted that he saw one of them smile sarcastically.

The train was advertised to stop at the most important views, so that they might be imprinted on our memories. Unfortunately I interfered, though in all innocence. At Glacier House—an hotel built in chalet style—every one left the train for luncheon. I happened to remark that we were much behind time and would be certain to arrive very late. To my surprise, a man opposite banged his fist on the table. “No such thing! Do you suppose I can’t get that train along? I’m the Conductor, and I wager I’ll be on time at Vancouver.” I was really not the least anxious for this—indeed was extremely disappointed when we rushed past all the points specially reserved for observation. It showed the danger of unnecessary remarks made for the sake of concocting conversation, and reminded me of the Bible warning about having to account for every idle word. I certainly had not the remotest idea that I was lunching with the Conductor, but of course nothing should be unexpected in North America.

My expectant friends were just as well pleased that they were only kept waiting half-an-hour, and it meant a little more time in which to explore Vancouver, with its background of snow mountains, its foreground of blue waters and its forests of giant trees. In Stanley Park one cedar measured nineteen feet in diameter; while another monster tree formed a huge platform, suitable for any modern Swiss Family Robinson; and the hollow trunk of a third could have been used as a coach-house and stables combined. But there were only a couple of days to spare before starting my ocean voyage on the yacht-like white-painted *Empress* boat, which my friends boarded with me so as to commit me into the special keeping of everybody on board. The anchor was weighed; the Chinese sailors let off their crackers, and away we glided through the Narrows, rejoicing in a deceptive calm that turned to a storm in the open

sea outside Victoria. It was blowing so hard that the C.P.R. tender took a long time to come alongside; and a C.P.R. luminary, who had come out on her to see me, pelted me with boxes of chocolates and flowers, for fear he could not give them to me in a more conventional way. He scrambled on board at last by means of a rope-ladder, and wrote my name in large letters all over the captain's cabin to secure my importance in advance. Once more there were good wishes and good-byes—last good-byes to Canada. Then we set our faces westwards, though it seemed a contrary proceeding, considering that the Far East was the goal of our voyaging, and that we were about to steer our course to the Land of the Rising Sun.

CHAPTER II.

VIA JAPAN TO HONG KONG.

ON board I found myself one of a trio of specially privileged passengers. The others were a lady with a handle to her name and a nice middle-aged man, first cousin to a Duke. At least he never referred to any of his connections, but his ducal relationship was mentioned for him by everybody else. We three sat next the captain at meals, and we were personally conducted by him on to the bridge and given afternoon tea in his cabin.

This was a real voyage, quite different to the floating hotel conditions of the transit across the Atlantic. Before the end of it I had grown so nautical that I was incapable of counting time except by bells. I had explored the *Empress* almost from truck to keelson, and called all her parts by their technical names. I even understood what was happening when the quartermaster ran up on the foc'sle head and touched his cap to the chief officer, who, with his feet on a mooring-chock, was leaning over the rail. "The captain's compliments, sir, and he wants to know if the anchor is aweigh, and if not, why you have 'vast heaving?"

The chief officer answered in a very strained tone, "Tell the captain the fifteen shackle is not in sight yet, but the anchor has just come to the hawse, flew up with a back hitch of the cable on the crown and a turn

round the shank, and the whole lot is foul of the stern; and tell him I'm going to hook the cat on, and if the crown and the fall will stand it, I shall heave it up and clear it on deck."

The quartermaster touched his cap again, and answered, "Ay, ay, sir:" but the important point to me was that I understood.

The first fortnight was spent far out at sea, with never a trace of land except the Aleutian Isles, which were Delusion Isles for all we could see of them. There was nothing but water, water, almost as still and unrippled as a stagnant farmyard pond—nothing but a veil of fog drawn over it, seldom letting in a peep of sun. Mother Carey's chickens would sometimes flit round the vessel's bows, some acrobatic porpoises would turn a few somersaults in our wake, or a shoal of black fish stare at the white *Empress* intruding on their rights. Damp mists bathed our cheeks and cold winds dishevelled our hair, till suddenly, without warning, the chilly North and the dingy West took a hasty departure. A sky of the most æsthetic blue and green and grey tints unrolled itself before us, flecked by clouds with jagged edges, facsimiles of those on Japanese fans. A sharp outline of purple mountain on the horizon seemed to defy the maxim that nature knows no lines. The sea was transfigured, and was soon dotted with quaint, brown-sailed fishing craft. It was good-bye to the West, to the practical, the prosaic! We were in the glorious, flaming East, with its picturesqueness, its languor, and its brilliant, sensuous beauty. We cast anchor in Yokohama harbour, and there, in the scorching month of July, I made a first bowing acquaintance with Japan.

The introduction was so hurried, and so soon relegated to a mere memory, that it seemed as if in a dream that one rickshawed one summer evening down

Isazakicho—Street of the Theatres—where paper banners formed an avenue as they flaunted jauntily from the playhouse walls. The whole illumination consisted of paper-lanterns, which flung a tinted radiance—orange, magenta, purple—on the kimono-covered crowd passing on its way in a silence only disturbed by the monotonous click-clack, click-clack of the “geta” or wooden clogs. The little native shops were filled in careless profusion with cloisonné vases, china teapots, silk embroideries, and all the dainty knick-knacks that people treasure as curios in the West. And while below men still bought and sold, and artisans fashioned their cunning devices, above on the open storeys doll-like figures flitted to and fro, and rid themselves of their kimonos, quite unabashed, and lay down to sleep with hard wooden pillows propping their slim little necks.

But ten o'clock soon came—the appointed hour for returning—and the captain, the Duke's cousin, the Lady with the Handle, and several others, made quite an assemblage on the bund. Just then a solitary rickshaw came up with one pathetic occupant, a German Fräulein of uncertain years, who had come all alone to explore Japan, and was staying behind at Yokohama. She appeared to have travelled much all by herself, and was always very timid and silent. Her only statement in regard to any subject was, that she found it “sehr interessant.” But as she joined our lively party, and we asked how she came to be out so late all alone, her eyes grew hungry, and she was startled into a longer answer.

“At the hotel I found it very ‘langweilig.’” She spoke in German, and no English equivalent seems to express the word with its intensity of boredom and weariness. “Only,” she added hastily, “it is ‘sehr interessant.’”

Away across the bay the *Empress* blinked a sleepy

welcome. We had boarded our sampan and it swayed on the water. We were parted from the lonely figure, the poor Fräulein with the forlorn little plaint who yet found everything so full of interest. The Duke's cousin said he felt he ought to have stayed with her.

"How much better charity could flourish if it were not for the proprieties," he complained.

He had always been kind to her. No one else had troubled much about her, and yet everybody had been so good to me. The reason for the distinction was so topsy-turvy, for the thirty years or so of time that divided us ought to have made them much nicer to her. But a woman's day is short. Her sun sets soon ; and unless she has secured her solar system of family life, there may be no planets to lighten the night time. Still, after all, whether in sunshine or darkness, to work the will of the Creator seems the only sure method of making life — lonely or otherwise — always "sehr interessant."

At Kobe I was presented with a letter beginning "My dear Cousin," and I was at once received into the open arms of relations of whose existence I had known nothing before. Unfortunately, "familiarity breeds contempt" in Japan as elsewhere ; and, instead of studying the customs of the country, I was at once taken to watch the usual round of tennis and croquet and cricket that goes on monotonously wherever there are Britishers, regardless of whether they happen to be inhabiting a homely country parish, an equatorial desert, or a terrestrial paradise. Owing to the American element baseball was also indulged in at Kobe, and, judging by the bands playing in every direction, one might have fancied oneself back in the United States. It happened to be the 4th of July, and "Stars and Stripes" and "Marching through Georgia" woke Yankee echoes among Japanese surroundings in the most incongruous way. The 4th

of July was much feasted as well as trumpeted, and as a result, the captain of the steam-launch, on which we hoped to return to the *Empress*, decided that a cruise round Kobe harbour would be much better for our health. From midnight almost to the dawn we were forced to explore the watery surroundings of Kobe, while the captain of the launch offered to fight any one who suggested other employment for the night. Hot, sticky, and worn out we stood wearily awaiting disaster, our one and only consolation that the captain of the *Empress* was also ignominiously forced to take part in this nocturnal cruise. Had he not been with us we should certainly have been left behind at Kobe. As it was, the *Empress* had to be patient till the effects of the 4th of July celebrations took a somnolent phase.

Everybody expects letters from any one who is travelling, though they could not be filled with a more inconvenient desire. I stayed in the saloon and missed seeing most of the Inland Sea, so as dutifully to indite my doings to my relations, and spent the remainder of the time regretting that I had not given myself up to the study of the scenery, as no presentiment told me that I was to pass twice again through the Inland Sea.

I was up at daybreak to help to keep station on entering Nagasaki harbour. The sun rose as we passed Takaboko—or Pappenberg, as the Dutch named it—the island maligned to globe-trotters as the one from which, in days gone by, the converts of the Jesuits used to be thrown over into the sea. Most history books, however, quite exonerate Takaboko in this respect. The beautiful hill-surrounded harbour was filled with steamers and sampans, and here and there a graceful sailing-ship spread her sails in the morning light. The captain escorted the select trio on shore to explore the fascinating town; and in the afternoon we crossed the hills to the fishing village of Mogi—the usual passenger

jaunt—and saw the bamboos, the rice-fields, the fir-trees, the unembarrassed blend of things Eastern and Western which is so marked in Japanese scenery, and none the less in Japanese character, and perhaps accounts for much of the mystery of their marvellous proficiency and success.

As we steamed from Nagasaki the æsthetic atmosphere of Japan faded gradually. The influence of China already enveloped us, and the waters of the Yangtse jaundiced the sea that is known as “Yellow” far beyond the river’s mouth. Yet at night the most brilliant phosphorescence illuminated the darkness, and lighted up our faces and broke in sparkling shivers under the vessel’s bows. Each wave had a halo of glory; and in our wake a pathway of silver radiance stretched skywards to the horizon, a presentment, it might be, of the light that “shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

The *Empress* dropped most of her passengers at Shanghai, and then a few days afterwards ended her voyage at the ideal destination, Hong Kong. In the noonday glare and heat Victoria nestled white and cool-looking at the foot of the green-sided Peak, where man has assisted the Creator by clothing the hill with trees, adding to the brilliant tints of the natural vegetation. The earth where exposed was ruby red, and the water varied from emerald to sapphire. Beyond Kowloon, on the mainland, the mountains rose steep and abrupt, their colouring like the opal and amethyst. Taimoshan, the “great military watch mountain,” about 3000 feet high, was the chief point that towered beyond the “Fragrant Lagoon”—the name by which our possession is represented in Chinese characters.

The heat was paralysing. One envied a great brown junk, which was having water sluiced through bamboos on to her sunburnt sails, as if in an effort to cool her.

Yet activity was certainly the general example. Steam-launches puffed here, there, and everywhere; sampans were rowed backwards and forwards, women almost always in charge, and babies tumbling about them in every direction. These sampan-dwellers are a race apart; many thousands live afloat in Hong Kong harbour, and have separate flats, as it were, in one sampan, the bows and the stern being quite distinct residential quarters. We were surrounded by shipping of all sorts, from rusty old tramps to spruce, polished men-of-war; from four-masted barques to trim little yachts, and bulky Chinese junks with big goggle eyes to spy out the way they should sail in.

Again I was surprised by unknown friends coming on board to meet me.

"Don't ever change your name," the Duke's cousin advised. "It seems to be an 'Open Sesame' everywhere."

"We have come to take you to bathe," announced the unknown friends.

I was arrayed in spotless white linen, and was naturally a little startled.

"Dear me, do I look dirty?" I asked.

They hurriedly explained that they intended no reflection upon me, but that bathing was the fashionable employment of the hot weather.

So we went to bathe in a fussy launch, which carried quite two dozen or more people to a little bay beyond the Lymoon fort, where every one put on bathing apparel. The hostess was very proper, so the ladies were sent in first, while the men stood in a row on the launch to watch them. If they had disported themselves in the water at the same time they would have had much less view of saturated forms and clinging garments. That is the unfortunate part of extreme propriety,—it generally overreaches itself.

We had tea on the launch coming back ; and the return from American to English society was sternly emphasised by tea-cups passed me in frigid silence by all over whom the formula of introduction had not been mumbled. My tongue grew so tired of inactivity that at last I volunteered an observation to a plump young man who sat near me. He grew red in the face and very embarrassed. I discovered afterwards that he owned a title with suitable accompaniments, and was quite the catch of the season, or would have been had not July in Hong Kong been entirely unseasonable. His excessive timidity was therefore perhaps excusable. When he found voice to reply, several others chimed in energetically. They had been most anxious to talk, but had not ventured till an example had been set them ; so, after all, insular formalities have their advantage, for while they crush down personal initiative on one side, they send it bulging up on the other.

Once we went ashore it was a mercy to have done with people and think only of shops, the shops of Hong Kong, with their wares of silk, silver, ivory—a list that would read like the presents the Queen of Sheba brought to King Solomon. It was hard to tear oneself away, hard to pass the flower-sellers with their itinerant gardens, and be trundled off in a rickshaw through the streets crowded by soldiers and sailors and a mixed European population, and the Chinese pushing and staring and shouting—always shouting, no matter whether they be argumentative or amicable. What else can be expected of a nation untroubled by nerves, all having been destroyed by the effort to remember some of the 30,000 or more characters of its written language, and enunciate four or more—as the case may be, according to the particular province—intonations over each single sound of its speech ? Conversation can scarcely be anything but noisy when

the most minute deviation from the correct undulation of the voice may totally alter the meaning of the intended word. We left the crowded streets of Victoria and climbed the steep hillside by a cable-railway, said to have the honour and glory of being the first Asia ever possessed. We mounted. Below us lay the harbour, bathed in the golden glory of evening, with the deep-tinted mountains a frame to it, and the ships of the nations lolling drowsily on its burnished waves. In the glow of the sunset Hong Kong looked a true emerald isle of the far-away East, set in a casing of rubies and sapphires, till presently her coloured gems were wrapped away in downy cotton-wool clouds, and only sprays of diamonds were left to flash from the ships and the tiara-like coast-line of light. Then we reached the top of the Peak and exchanged the queer little train for sedan-chairs, in which we were trotted away with by coolies to a rhythmic swing that sometimes has the same effect as a ground-swell upon bad sailors. We were carried along the neatest asphalt paths that intersected the natural wild greenery of the mountain top, and led the way to jaunty little bungalows and flower-filled gardens, where the residents could spend the summer months in a state of damp coolness, and enjoy exquisite views over an island-dotted sea and the southern mountains of the Flowery Empire. All was perfectly still and peaceful. Not a sound was to be heard but the coolies' grunts and, in the distance, sleepy strokes on a gong announcing the hour to "chin chin joss" in some far-away temple.

No greater contrast to North America could have been found than the Peak at Hong Kong, or rather Mount Kellett, where my unknown friends had a bungalow. They were not altogether left there in undisturbed peace, for a typhoon had recently blown

down half the house, and, in consequence, I had to share a room with a cageful of canaries. They were very early risers, and from the moment of waking never left off practising singing in Chinese; but one must be personally acquainted with a Chinese-bred canary to appreciate the feelings of the audience when half a dozen of these birds give lusty vent on each piercing note to the four intonations, especially about five o'clock in the morning.

Another typhoon blew up for my special edification, it seemed, though I could have done without the attention. We were out when it began, and we had to leave our sedan-chairs and crawl along on our hands and knees to avoid being blown over one of the many precipices which the tidy asphalt-paths seemed to delight in skirting. Our raiment travelled ahead of us in the most alarming way, and it was hard to believe on getting in that nothing more than our hats had actually been torn off us. All the windows and doors had to be shut tight and barricaded as well, and the condition of damp coolness inside changed to one of damp heat that was almost insufferable. We resigned ourselves to the inevitable and went to bed early, after depositing our clothes in the drying-room. That apartment is an absolute necessity to any house at the Peak during the summer. Any belonging that does not pass the night in the drying-room is certain to be covered with green mould next morning. During the winter everything cracks with dryness, I was told, and the conditions are exactly reversed, so the climate understands variety.

The typhoon passed by, so to speak, on the other side, and next day not a leaf was stirring when I was taken down to the Happy Valley. It seemed suitable to find everything at peace in such a quiet spot, where the race-course on the level looked more incongruous

than the cemeteries on the surrounding hillsides. Beautiful Hong Kong! One's body could find many a worse last resting-place than the slopes round the Happy Valley. And life should be pleasant on that verdurous island, transmogrified from the bare barren rock which the British took possession of in 1841, and now a great market of the world, instead of, as then, the mere home of a few labourers and fishermen and the scene of incessant piracies. One could not help wishing that 20,000 opium-chests had not had anything to do with the acquisition of such a pretty bit of the British Empire. People of the place, when they remembered history at all, insisted mostly on the iniquity of the Chinese in burning the chests, and the fact that the poppy was grown in China itself, and that the mandarins openly smuggled in the drug while hypocritically denouncing the traffic. All that was very true, no doubt; but, nevertheless, one looked at the hideous wrecks of humanity one passed now and again, and wished that rice and grain had always taken the narcotic's place on the plains peopled by the underfed millions of India.

But I had not many days in which to discuss the opium or any other question. The morning broke on which I was to say good-bye to Hong Kong, and the old French steamer that was to carry me on lay ready to start at mid-day. I went on board. My friends—unknown no longer—wished me good speed, and the “*cloche du départ*” sounded. Just then I noticed a launch shoot from the wharf and head towards us furiously. I caught sight of an anxious face and a pair of binoculars riveted on us. Nearer and nearer bustled the launch, but already the first pulsations of awakening machinery vibrated the sides of the old French steamer. The launch bounded up. The binoculars were dropped. A man's figure started forwards.

A second bell rang. The *Sydney* gave a heave. The next moment we felt ourselves in full motion. I wondered vaguely whether the late arrival had caught us in time; but, after all, what did it matter? What did anything matter, except the fact that Hong Kong was fading in the distance and a typhoon said to be imminent. I curled myself up on the poop and wept, for the world seemed suddenly uncomfortably large and I proportionately small and insignificant.

CHAPTER III.

VIA SAIGON TO SINGAPORE.

"MAY I fetch you a chair?" some one suddenly inquired, and I discovered that the launch had caught the steamer, for its English occupant stood before me.

I had left the poop to make the gloomy discovery that everybody except me had come on board provided with deck-chairs. The Englishman, it seemed, was no better off than I was. However, being Britishers and therefore natural colonists, he thought we ought to adapt ourselves to circumstances, which we did by appropriating two of the best chairs and remaining in discreet ignorance of their lawful possessors. So, in our own estimation monarchs of all we surveyed, we lolled at ease on our borrowed seats and took stock of our surroundings.

The French steamer was an ancient vessel. Rain poured in through battered awnings. Natives slumbered heavily on the hatches. Bales of fruit blocked the decks in every direction. The passengers consisted of an American professor addicted to vivisection, a few French women in very airy attire, several mercantile men of Russo-Hebraic extraction, and a couple of Greek Church missionaries with long flowing beards and costumes that looked like night-gowns, and evidently did duty as such, judging by their crumpled appearance. There was also a mild lunatic, who made

use of a canvas-covered basket of fruit as a couch for his afternoon siesta. As he vanished lower and lower into its pulpy depths it was pathetic to watch the juice ooze out over the deck in agitated trickles. Last, and least in point of size, we numbered a Japanese diplomat with his wife and family. The wife had to mount a chair to reach the looking-glass in her daily struggle to cope with the intricacies of European fashions.

We left Hong Kong on a Saturday, and early on the following Tuesday morning we entered the Saigon river. At ten o'clock we dropped anchor at Saigon, where the French tricolour at once greeted us. Flags and uniforms play a large part in French colonisation. France has no overflow of population, but colonies give her pleasant scope for paraphernalia and officialdom, and though they seem to be rather a source of weakness than of strength, the Tonkinese possessions enable her to sit down comfortably and handicap British trade in Southern China. So the French cannot consider that their Asiatic expenditure is altogether wasted.

The Englishman suggested that we should go on shore and make a day of it, like an 'Arry and 'Arriet, and as there was certainly not a suitable chaperon on board I consented to do without one. We squeezed into a tiny conveyance like a rat-trap, and were dragged away by a mouse-like pony. We passed several French officers mounted on the same kind of steeds. They had to keep their feet well hitched up in the stirrups to prevent their being forced to make use of their own legs. We found Saigon a pretty looking town, with good shops, fine public buildings, and charming boulevards. In spite of the heat, mosquitoes, and lizards, it had a sort of volatile French effect that seemed almost flippant in the Orient.

Our rat-trap driver discoursed volubly, and was

most anxious to introduce us to the sights, but, as he spoke pidgin-French, his information was more fluent than comprehensive. However, the Englishman was all-sufficient as a guide-book, and told me how the first cessions of land were granted to France in return for the help Louis XVI. gave the King of Anam in overcoming some rebels. "Preserve me from my friends," the potentate might have exclaimed, could he have foreseen the future when Cochin China, Anam, Cambodia, and Tonquin were all to fall under a Gallic yoke, and be known as French Indo-China. It was easy to see that Saigon was a great military centre, and, with man's love of exactitude, the Englishman discovered that there were 1000 French soldiers there at that time, and a large force of Anamites under French officers. The hot, moist stickiness of the climate made us ready to believe that there was a huge hospital in the place, with 1500 beds for European patients, besides a native hospital and a Pasteur institute.

As we did not wish to take advantage of these medical preparations, the Englishman considered that we had better try and cool ourselves by a rest in the botanical gardens. Unfortunately, our advent there was heating. We got out of our rat-trap beside a monkey's cage. I stopped to survey the inmate through my lorgnon.

"How he would like to get hold of these," I remarked; and the words were not out of my mouth before the glasses were snatched from my hands, and the next moment the monkey held them up and stared at me consequentially.

We got them back at last; but it was an agitating process, as no one came to our help, and a great tiger shook the bars of his flimsy cage and roared at us ferociously. At last we went on, in a chastened mood,

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THE MONKEY HELD THE GLASSES UP.

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ABSTRACTS

past an iguana lolling on a stump, with his front feet—they looked like hands—crossed in a devotional attitude. A little farther on a big crane squatted on his haunches—a most inelegant attitude for a bird of his size. All around us were the beautiful trees and shrubs of the botanical gardens, refreshed by showers of rain, continually turned on like a hose. The river wound sleepily past us, with a few sampans floating along it. We watched them pass round the bend, and leave us without a human being in sight except the driver who slumbered on top of the rat-trap. We sat down near an enclosure, where some horrible-looking, long-billed, heavy-pouched adjutant birds dug their cruel beaks into the unfortunate fish supplied to them for their dinners. Suddenly a piercing squeal broke the silence—an uncanny sound that got on one's nerves, for there was not a man, woman, or child anywhere near to have produced it. The only solution to the mystery seemed impossible, for whoever heard of a tortured fish giving vent to a heartrending protest? However, the Englishman observed, "I have been told that there are screaming fish in the China seas. After all, why shouldn't there be? There are flying-fish and travelling fish; why shouldn't there be screaming fish?" There seemed no reason against it, especially as the truth of the assertion appeared to have been just proved to us.

We returned to the rat-trap after this, and let it take us away from the botanical gardens. Then we deserted it and went by train through swampy country to Cholons, an outlying suburb of Saigon. There was only one other occupant of our railway carriage, and, feeling so remote from anything English, we were so rude as to indulge in some audible criticisms. Unfortunately for our peace of mind the train stopped at a station, and the individual in question popped his head

out of the window and hailed a passer-by: "Hullo! old man, you're the very chap I want. No time now. Come round to my diggings. So long." Conversation on our part diminished, and we were left with leisure to digest the moral, which is to be prepared for the ubiquitous Britisher, even in the back of beyond.

On returning to Saigon we decided to dine on shore, and questioned an officer we met as to the best restaurant.

"Le café Olivier," he informed us. "On ne mange pas bien, mais on mange moins mal."

We considered him fastidious, as we partook of an excellent dinner of about a dozen courses; and after it the band played, and Saigon seemed more than ever French and frivolous.

We listened to the music for a little while, and then found another miniature conveyance with a pair of mice attached. We got in, and gave the driver full instructions to take us back to the landing-stage. The ponies dashed off at a gallop, their speed out of all proportion to the length of their legs. At first it was very pleasant. The steamy atmosphere felt refreshing as we went whirling through it at that break-neck pace. We left the town and careered down country roads, where we caught glimpses of native huts tucked away among the shadows, and above the tree-tops the moon blinked at us in a condescending way. It all seemed so natural and familiar to me, who had spent the first decade of my life under tropical skies. But by degrees there seemed something very unnatural in our not coming upon any symptom of a steamer. The Englishman thought the driver had better be interrogated as to our whereabouts. I called out to him in pidgin-French, with which I was becoming more conversant, but my inquiries were left unanswered. The patter of

the ponies' feet was the only answer vouchsafed. The Englishman then took part with more forcible figures of speech, but still we continued to whirl along the roads as if a hostile army were after us. All other measures proving ineffectual, the Englishman pulled the driver backwards off the box and brought the ponies to a standstill. I inquired, sternly, where we were going, and gathered that our jehu had not the remotest idea. He had been engaged to drive, and had undertaken his duty: where and how were details with which he evidently thought he had no concern. Indeed, had it not been for our drastic methods, that drive seemed as if it might have been prolonged into eternity, continued in our next edition by our ghosts. As it was, however, it was brought to a conclusion, and we returned prosaically on board.

In the middle of the night a splash of oars woke both the echoes and the passengers, and a chorus of voices rippled out "Tra la la, tra la la la la, ra la la, tra la." Farewells and "au revoirs" followed, then the oars splashed once more, and again the light-hearted chorus broke into a dainty melody as the singers rowed back to the land of exile, into which, in spite of drawbacks of climate, they have instilled something of the charm and piquancy of "la belle France."

Next morning several French officers were added to our party.

"Good chaps," said the Englishman. "Such nice manners."

I thought so too as the day wore on and each in turn made me an offer of marriage with the most courteous unanimity. But when I told the Englishman, he only said, "Consummate asses," with a sudden change of opinion that was very rude under the circumstances, as I explained.

"It would be interesting," I said, "to make a list of

the names one has never heard that one might have changed one's own for."

But the Englishman considered this too Irish a task to undertake.

The Frenchmen gave pleasant accounts of life at Saigon, with its dinners and concerts, but had a different story to tell of Tonkin, where they were quartered in huts in which they had to hold up their umbrellas when it rained.

In addition to the officers we shipped a large passenger load of mosquitoes. They were evidently seasick at first, for we saw nothing of them for a day, and then they emerged, lean and famished, to convert us into a Carlton restaurant. In spite of all I suffered from their ravages, I took advantage of the two and a-half days' voyage from Saigon to Singapore to be instructed in the history of the Malay Archipelago. The Englishman's knowledge was as widespread as his experiences. He had "shaken the clubs and the messes," just as Kipling describes, and now belonged to "the legion that never was 'listed,'" and was as much an unconscious maker of Empire as those early adventurers who, in search of a fancied Eldorado, first discovered the far-away countries of the East. A soldier's grave ultimately received him, and an assemblage of the chief generals voted him bravest hero of the South African war. But his finest laurels were, like many another's, those that bloomed in obscurity from the gold-diggings at Kalgurlie to the "Aurea Chersonesus," or "Regio Latronum," as he told me the ancients had also described Malaya with more practical truth.

Perhaps a few other people are as ignorant as I was, till informed by the Englishman, that a woman was specially concerned with the early history of the Lion City—Singhapura, or Singapore. It seems, according to native writers, that it was founded in 1160 by emi-

grants from the banks of the river Malayu in Sumatra, and that the Javanese made repeated attacks upon it, but were always repulsed. However, nearly a century after the founding of the settlement the chieftain of the settlers married the beautiful daughter of his Bandahara or viceroy. His other wives, out of jealousy, brought accusations against her, and she was condemned to a shameful death. The Bandahara could not even induce the prince to mitigate the severity of the death sentence, and, in revenge, he admitted the Javanese by night into the citadel. The Singhaporeans were driven out, to found a new colony at Malacca, from which point the Mohammedan Sumatrans quickly overspread the Peninsula, and the sultans of the Malay States to this day pride themselves upon their descent from the royal line of Menankabau in Sumatra, the accredited parent home of their stock.

The Portuguese, under Albuquerque, reduced Malacca in the sixteenth century, so that the enterprising community again sought fresh pastures and founded the kingdom of Jehore, which still rejoices in an independent sultan of its own. Everybody knows—for even I knew without the Englishman telling me—how the Dutch took Malacca from the Portuguese, and finally ceded the town to the British, who had already formed a settlement on Penang island and made a port on the island of Singapore, which had reverted to its primitive condition of a jungle-covered waste. Such was the origin of the Straits Settlements, which became a Crown Colony under the Colonial Office in 1867. But I had no time nor need to study their history any more by hearsay, for my unchaperoned journey round half the globe was completed, and Singapore lay stretched before me by the water-side.

The Englishman, in a learned way, had affiliated the Malays to the Mongol stock with intermixtures of black

Papuan and pre-Malay Caucasian elements, and said that the race was believed to have found its way from high Asia to Sumatra at a time when the island still remained part of the mainland. In the present day, he said, the inhabitants of the Peninsula might be classified as the aboriginal Sakais—harmless, unclothed jungle-dwellers, rapidly becoming extinct; the Mohammedan Malays—a pleasant, indolent people; and a largely mixed foreign population, of whom the greatest proportion are Chinese. As assortments of the heterogeneous population—Malays, Chinese, Eurasians, Boyanese, Dyaks, Javanese, Manilamen, Anamese, Klings, Armenians, Siamese, Singhalese, &c., &c.—clambered round the vessel, jabbering in unknown languages, it really seemed as if the Tower of Babel incident could only have just then taken place. Tiny Malay boys upset their canoes for our edification, and boats crowded round us, filled with pink and white coral, which we were entreated to buy. Still it was a quiet harbour scene as compared with Hong Kong, and I had no difficulty in spying out a man on the wharf, in a white suit and a solar topi, whom I at once recognised to be Joseph.

"Then you aren't at death's door after all," I called out, "or suffering from some fearful calamity. I couldn't imagine what could have happened when I got that cable. Indeed I'm none the wiser now. What is the matter?"

"Nothing that I'm aware of," Joseph coolly answered; and I discovered that no important occurrence, but a simple and remarkable desire for my society, had brought about the despatch of the cable and my consequent expedition round the world.

A most gentlemanly-looking Chinese with an exceptionally long queue took immediate charge of my belongings. Joseph gave him a few directions, which he

received in a nonchalant way that showed them to be mere waste of time and breath. His inscrutable personality bore the consciousness of four or five thousand years of more or less civilised ancestry, and I dwindled palpably in my own estimation before the polite condescension of my brother's Chinese boy.

Joseph and I got into a gharri and rattled past Wallich's Hill, through the town, along the esplanade, past Raffles' Hotel—called after the founder of British Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles—out on to the Tanglin road, where we soon reached our destination, a pretty creeper-covered bungalow.

Our hostess, in happy unceremonious eastern style, was just going away on a visit, but she left her husband behind her, and a host can often be all-sufficient for a guest. This one at once gave us the use of his carriage, so Joseph drove me through the native part of the town, where Chinese were working in the shops and Malays basking outside them, while specimens of all the other races before mentioned disported themselves before us as if they had been specially collected to give us an object-lesson in anthropology. Our eyes were not given a moment for rest, and, above all, our noses were overworked in the most scandalous way.

Joseph stopped at an animal dealer's and bought a small brown monkey, called a b'rok. The larger species of the same name are trained by the Malays, he informed me, to climb cocoa-nut trees and throw down the nuts. A young tiger was running about loose, and frisked round us like a magnified kitten; while a full-grown animal, destined for some zoological gardens, crouched near by in a cage, the picture of utter woe. He had not even the consolation of knowing himself to be a martyr to science, condemned to a life of miserable boredom for the sake of the education of selfish humanity.

On the esplanade a cool breeze stole in from the harbour and fanned the flamboyants, whose scarlet blossoms made the trees look as if they were in a terrible heat. The best equipages we passed were owned by Chinese, who drove up and down in pompous dignity, or sometimes left their conveyances to the use of their womankind. Before going in we went to the lovely botanical gardens, passing over red-tinted roads and by tangles of ferns and creepers and trees. The whole island seemed a garden where the vegetation tumbled over itself in its eagerness to grow fast. Heavy scents hung on the air. A languorous calm brooded over the earth. Tropical nature exulted in her motherhood, and under one's very eyes and nose brought forth from the teeming treasures of her rich maternity.

The climate felt quite deliciously cool at dinner, under gently swaying punkahs in a large open hall where civet cats, or "musangs" as the Malays call them, ran in and out and asserted their privileges as pampered and over-fed pets. But punkahs are chiefly reserved for meal times in Malaya. There were none in the other rooms; and later on that evening the sky seemed to have descended and to be clasping my head. The atmosphere felt as if it had gathered me up and wound itself tightly round me. I struggled in its grasp, and choked as I felt myself enveloped. Outside the frogs croaked and insects hummed and night-birds joined in the chorus of harmonious discords. You must be wooed by the tropics before you are won. You must pant and gasp and struggle to be free before you sink upon the soft warm breast, and in yielding find delight in the rapturous clasp and the burning kiss of the Orient.

As Joseph was stationed in Selangor—one of the Malay States on the Peninsula—he, the Chinese boy,

the monkey, and I had all to commit ourselves next day to the waves. We steamed slowly past a great Russian vessel, crammed from stem to stern with human beings, said to be convicts destined for Saghalien, but in all probability emigrants of the type militant. We passed a picturesque village standing on stilts above the water. We passed the fortified shore; we passed the fortified islands, all placid and verdant and tree-covered, as though they had no acquaintance with anything not wholly peaceable. We pitched and tossed while the western sky changed from carmine and yellow ochre to a deep-toned royal purple, and sheet-lightning flashed like searchlights above the darkened sea.

We passed Malacca in the night, and about the middle of next day we turned into the Selangor river.

On either side of us were low-growing trees which raised stumpy heads to a monotonous level above the water. Here and there logs were propped up by the trunks, and every now and then one of them shifted its position and edged away slowly, leaving one to realise, with a shudder, that the apparent harmless piece of wood was a gruesome crocodile. Sand-flies and mosquitoes found their way on board, and malarial fever seemed to brood visibly over the sluggish river, from which the sunshine glared in pitiless heat. Joseph, by way of consolation, told me that we had almost reached the landing-place, Klang, Selangor's former port. My heart sank within me. What was this new abode which I was nearing? What could a country be like which was shut off from the outer world by a torpid mangrove swamp?

CHAPTER IV.

KUALA LUMPOR.

"AH! this is better," I said to Joseph as our vessel cast anchor and we went ashore at Klang.

A little native village nestled by the water-side with the tops of a few European houses just visible. Palms and the long smooth leaves of plantain-trees broke the monotony of never-ending mangrove swamp. Malays idled on the bank of the river, while Chinese made themselves useful as usual, and Klings, as the Tamils are called in the Peninsula, shouted raucous comments on the general proceedings.

The train was waiting, and Joseph and I were invited into the Resident's special carriage. Of course I took the monkey with me, though Joseph expostulated. He recovered from his displeasure sufficiently to point out all objects of interest. For this I was rather sorry, as I was extremely bored by my surroundings. The compartment was boxed in by shutters. It was laborious to peer under them and then only to be rewarded by the sight of a regular tangle of jungle, interrupted every now and then by prim-looking coffee estates. Joseph explained that the coffee was Liberian, and, though very nice to drink, only fetched a miserably low price in the market.

"What in the world, then, do they plant it for?" I asked. "They surely don't think they're philanthropic and improving the scenery?"

The next time Joseph drew my attention to the outlook I retaliated by a rhapsody upon the cañons of North America, and so prevented his continuing to invite me to screw my neck. The heat was oppressive. The shutters were intended to keep off the sun, but as that luminary had disappeared behind the jungle they only succeeded in shutting out the air. However, it was not a long journey. After about an hour and a half the train drew up in a blaze of light and we emerged on to an electrically-lit platform, and Joseph demanded triumphantly whether I did not find Kuala Lumpor station a worthy substitute for Victoria or Charing Cross.

He was much disgusted because I continued to clasp the monkey's basket, and the delinquent inside thrust out her arms and nipped his acquaintances by the leg when he brought them up to be introduced. Joseph rather naturally thought this was not at all the sort of first impression a sister of his should make. But, monkey and all, we soon scrambled up behind a horse that was pawing the ground impatiently, and Joseph's spirits were restored as he resumed his office of cicerone.

"Chow Kit's motor," he explained, as our steed jumped and swerved and a fussy vehicle snorted past us.

"A motor out here? It belongs to a Chinese?"

Astonishment was natural, for in those days automobiles were not too plentiful, even in Europe and America.

"Why not?" said Joseph. "A Chinese is the most go-ahead of men once he has shaken off conservatism and China. Straits-born Chinese go in for all the novelties. Ah! what do you think of that?"

I positively gasped.

Before us stretched an open green—the cricket and hockey ground of Kuala Lumpor. Beyond it, on the

farther side, was an unpretentious bungalow which Joseph described as the Selangor Club, known by its familiars as "the Spotted Dog." On our immediate right rose the object of wonderment—a great building of white stone which had the polished sheen of marble.

"The Government offices," said Joseph, introducing them, and I candidly confessed that I had not seen such a beautiful building for many a day. Joseph smiled patronisingly at my raptures. He had never indulged in any written description of Kuala Lumpor, capital of the Federated Malay States, and was now enjoying a thorough exposure of my ignorance. He pointed to the Government offices. "They'll make a fine ruin," he said.

He suggested that he should drive me home through the Lake Club Gardens, and Bushranger, a Waler with splendid paces, sprang forward as if he acquiesced in the idea. We bowled over perfect roads, past rounded hills with sloping swards, past fantastic palms and stretches of lily-covered water, where wreaths of mist shimmered steely grey in the starlight.

"Joseph," I whispered, "this is fairyland."

Joseph pulled up in front of a long, low porch lit up by Chinese lanterns. Flowers and ferns hung in swinging pots, and the air was scented with stephanotis. Two cream-coloured Siamese kittens, with brown noses and paws, came bounding out to meet us. The monkey seized one by the tail. It scratched Joseph all over in wild protestation. Joseph added his comments to the kitten's, and I felt thoroughly at home in Kuala Lumpor.

Evening certainly seems the proper time to arrive at a fresh place. There is something so delightful about waking to a new world next morning. It feels like a sort of rehearsal of one's advent into a future state. My first day at Kuala Lumpor began about six o'clock.

The sun came creeping up over the jungle. The voices of the night were silenced, and the birds began with much bustle to make their plans for the day. The dew shone like diamonds in the garden, where masses of magenta bougainvillea and violet-coloured thunbergia made gaudy daubs of colour where they clung to some trellis-work. Purple convolvuli covered the verandah. The dainty petals were still unfolded, but would close later on during the heat of the day, for they lead a nightly existence, and go to sleep in the daytime—a very sensible arrangement in countries where the sun's attentions are much wanting in tact. The bungalow was raised above the ground, for Europeans in the Peninsula follow the example of the Malays in that respect. The rooms opened on to a verandah which stretched the whole length of the bungalow. All round was the hothouse scenery, where ferns and creepers ran riot, and travellers' palms, talipot palms, areca palms, screw palms, and palmyra trees looked as if they were competing for prizes at a show. The air felt fresh to our faces as Joseph and I started out for a ride along the smooth red roads between tangles of wild luxuriance, where the wilderness blossomed with the treasures of English conservatories. Near the natives' houses grew dark-leaved durians, bread-fruit trees with great green pods, and slim-stemmed papayas which evidently held old-fashioned views of the sexes, as the appearance of the gentlemen trees was obviously unlike that of their lady friends. We had not been out long before the mists rolled away from the valleys, and clear across the plain, like a frame to the picture, stood the backbone of the Peninsula—the sapphire-tinted mountain range. After a gallop on the racecourse, we returned to the pretty hills on which the English bungalows were dotted, and round which the roads had a provoking habit of winding, bringing one back to the

place one had started from. But as no less than seven met outside our bungalow—in consequence known as Simpang Tujoh, or Seven Dials—there was not much danger of getting lost.

After breakfast, defects began to show up which one could ignore earlier in the morning. The house stood on the side of a hill—a great mistake in that country, where a through current of air is above all necessary. The drawing-room had a square table in the centre, with a circle of chairs round it. That was also depressing. “Joseph,” I said, “I used to give you credit for taste.”

“Oh! don’t move the things,” he expostulated, as I shunted the furniture. “Nipis insisted on arranging the house. You’ll hurt his feelings.”

“Who’s Nipis?” I asked.

“The Malay for thin or lean,” said Joseph.

“I don’t see any sense in your answer.”

“You’ll see less in Nipis.”

“What’s that? what’s that?” exclaimed a voice from the verandah, and a plump individual, with a smile like the man in the moon’s, pushed his way in through the curtains.

“Talk of the devil,” said Joseph. “Nipis, let me introduce you to my sister.”

“Allow me to present my first offering,” he said, bowing unnecessarily low, considering his superfluity of figure. Close upon his heels waddled an extraordinary animal.

“Oh, really, is that for me? How very interesting. Is it a Malay curiosity?” I asked.

Our visitor seized the misshapen creature. “It’s a dear little dog,” he explained. “The dogs of the Malay Peninsula are following up Darwin’s theory. They’re trying all sorts of mixed marriages. They’re seeing if they can’t evolve a new species. Baron Huntrabbit—

pronounced Huntbit, of course; he's got the title, though his pedigree is a little Eurasian—Baron Hunt-rabbit, for example, belongs to a class of his own. Yes, dear little doggie, he belongs to a class of his own."

Lord Huntrabbit — pronounced Huntbit — grinned with his tail in the foolish way dogs have, looked very pleased with himself, and made himself thoroughly at home.

"I can't hang about here all day," said Joseph. No one had asked him to. "Here, Nipis, you look after my sister. We know your office hours belong to a class of their own. Griselda will need help. She's got to interview a tukang jait and an ayah, and she doesn't know a syllable of Malay. Griselda, here's a vocabulary; it'll give you every word you can possibly want."

Joseph departed. My visitor laid down his topi and took an exhaustive look round the room. "A woman's hand, that's evident. All the furniture shifted already. 'Pon my word, it's wonderful! Why couldn't I have stuck it about in just the same way?"

I was not required to answer this conundrum, for the tukang jait (*anglicè* tailor) arrived at this moment, and Nipis was delighted to show off his fluency in Malay.

"Tell him I want two things done at once: I want a plain thin shirt waist"—my expressions then were aggressively American—"and a jabot of chiffon added to trim this bodice."

Nipis opened his mouth only to shut it. The tukang jait, with no knowledge of English, had comprehended as much as the interpreter. Suddenly Nipis clapped his hands to his head. "Excuse me, excuse me," he cried, seized his topi, and shot out of the room.

I was quite alarmed. "What's the matter?" I shouted.

"Excuse me, excuse me," he repeated; "I've just remembered that I quite forgot to shave."

So I had to continue my interview unassisted, and found it more difficult than I had imagined. Joseph had told me that Malay was made use of by all nationalities—in fact, that it was a common thing to hear Chinese from different parts of China talking together in that language, as their own dialects would be no more intelligible to each other than Double Dutch. But what he had not explained was that Chinese Malay was by no means a Malay's Malay, and that a Tamil's or a Bengali's Malay was something very different again. The tukang jait was a Bengali, and all the servants available were Chinese. None of the words they uttered were to be found anywhere in the vocabulary, for the simple reason that Joseph had never told me that the Chinese dispose of their r's in quite a classy way, only they change them into l's instead of w's. By the time my patience was exhausted, and the tukang jait was on the point of dissolving into tears, a Kling presented himself on the verandah and, salaaming low, thrust an enormous volume before me. 'Diary of a White-Ant Killer' was printed in huge letters on the outside. Ah Song—the gentlemanly servant with the long queue—the tukang ayer, or water-carrier,—a very responsible domestic in a Malay States establishment,—the tukang jait, and the Kling, went through a pantomimic display to signify that I was required to add my observations to the white-ant killer's diary. I could not understand how I was to contribute to such an interesting autobiography, beyond stating that it seemed obvious that he could never have run up a tailor's bill. I was wondering whether this was a suitable fact to draw attention to, when I suddenly remembered that strange noises had awakened me in the morning, and that when I looked out through my doorway I had noticed the monkey descend from her perch and stare inquisitively under the house. This recollection made

me realise that the unclothed Kling was, in his own line, a Government official, and that he wished me to report upon his labours in clearing away all traces of white ants' ravages from under the floor of the bungalow. This point becoming clear, he salaamed profusely with much satisfaction, but a great difference of opinion followed over the length of his toils. The white-ant killer demonstrated his opinions with a great deal of vehemence, while the tukang jait dried his tears and became blandly conciliatory now that somebody else was in the wars. The tukang ayer explained everything in Chinese, which only added to the confusion; while Ah Song looked on in gentlemanly indifference, and went off in the middle to brush his hair—the most sensible thing he could do, as it took a whole hour's attention every day. The heat and the altercations were exhausting, so, satisfied or dissatisfied, I sent everybody away.

No suitable ayah was forthcoming, so Ah Song was installed as a masculine lady's-maid, or rather lady's-boy—a post often filled by a Chinese man-servant in the Far East. The suitability of the system is a mooted question, as the strictness of Celestial ideas on matters of feminine decorum is universally known. Be that as it may, Ah Song made an ideal attendant. His fingers were as dexterous as any woman's, and one's garments never received such tender attention from the smartest of French lady's-maids.

To be a lady's-boy is no sinecure in a climate where one's belongings have to be continually shaken and aired to prevent their becoming mouldy and insect-eaten, and where, owing to the perpetual moisture, one is everlastingly changing one's clothes. If you get up at six and go out in the cool of early morning, it means you must make a fresh toilet before you appear at breakfast at nine o'clock. Even if you spend a quiet morning on

the verandah you will probably have to change again before tiffin at one. After tiffin you are sure to be in such a state of damp heat that, even if you do not need an hour or two of rest, you will certainly have to change again before you appear for the afternoon. The sixty minutes from five to six are the most momentous of the twenty-four hours. From five to six you drive, leave cards, play golf, tennis, or croquet, and then it is suddenly dark, otherwise you would certainly need to change again. If you are neither vain nor nervous of chills you may appear in a crumpled state at the Club, and play cards or study the papers under a punkah. Dinner is a late function generally, though, of course, Chinese servants can serve it to you at any time. They could dish it up for you in ten minutes if you were suddenly filled with a desire for it at eleven o'clock in the morning. It appears a matter of supreme indifference to them if a dozen guests arrive unexpectedly. If your own household goods or edibles are insufficient, the accommodating customs of the East allow your domestics to borrow from your friends. Your belongings will be loaned in their turn whenever your neighbour's needs so require; and you must never at some one else's dinner-party be startled to see your own crest upon the forks and spoons.

A series of dinners initiated me into the society of Kuala Lumpor. Joseph and I dined with the Resident. We dined with the Resident-General. We dined with all the Government officers in turn. Each of the four Federated States—Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang—has its own Resident, with a Resident-General supreme over all four; while the Governor of the Straits Settlements holds highest office of all as High Commissioner. To be "Government punya," as the Malays call it—that is to say, belonging to the Government service—is to be at the height of Malay States society; but as

there are practically no depths the heights are not unduly exalted by contrast. As almost every one is "Government punya," no one has much opportunity for airing superiority, and officialdom becomes so monotonous that any variation of it, in the shape of planters and miners, is quite a welcome relief. A few army men find billets with the Malay States Guides—the military force of Sikhs and Pathans which garrison the British Protectorates; or with the police force of Indians and Malays, also officered by Englishmen. Most of the men in the States are known familiarly by the initial letters of their official titles, so that, if R.G., J.K., D.O., &c., are to become intelligible, the first accomplishment for a stranger is the acquirement of a kind of disordered alphabet.

Joseph considered that I treated the sacred Government machinery with levity. "These are the model colonies of the British Empire," he informed me sententiously. "Here we start from the first with all the latest improvements and innovations. We avoid the mistakes that were made formerly. Here we have created model colonies, an example for all the rest."

"Only they are not colonies."

"No; Protectorates. The band plays——"

"Rule Britannia at functions instead of——"

"The National Anthem. Precisely. That's the difference."

I explained to Joseph that I could not live up to the dignity which his position demanded. Circumstances were always against it. On the first occasion when I went to return calls I tied on a veil at Joseph's special request, regardful of appearances and regardless of the heat. But my trouble was quite unnecessary, for the master of the first house I arrived at came out to meet me, carrying a large white wa-wa, or gibbon ape, apparently asleep in his arms. As I came up, staring

at the curiosity through my glasses,—a white wa-wa is very precious and rare,—the creature struck out a sudden ferocious blow straight from the shoulder—Joseph described it as a left-handed Fitzsimmons—which sent my hat flying and tore my veil in two.

“Sheer case of jealousy,” said Nipis, who happened to be present and gallantly rescued my hat. “Jealousy, you know, is sincerer flattery even than imitation. It should be more gratifying than thousands of compliments.”

I wished I could think so, as I tried to put my hat on straight without a looking-glass.

CHAPTER V.

KUALA LUMPUR.

THOUGH I considered it my duty to administer judicious snubs to Joseph on the score of official conceit, I certainly did not discredit his statement when he described the Federated Malay States as colonial prodigies. The wheels of administration run very smoothly, even though an administrator may one month fulfil a magistrate's duties and the next be called upon to undertake the superintendence of mines, in happy-go-lucky disregard of his knowledge or competence. Though Joseph grumbled at the system he boasted of the results, and wished he could issue a free invitation to all critics to come to the Malay Peninsula, and drive along the red laterite roads as smooth as a billiard-table and go into the Government offices where justice is dispensed.

"Let them join," said Joseph, "in the games on the play-grounds, where the natives learn to expend their superfluous energy in healthy, muscle-making ways. I don't refer to the fish. Let them visit the hospitals, the schools, the museums, the gold-mines, and the tin-mines, which produce three-quarters of the world's supply of tin. Let them explore the rice, the coffee, the tea, the cocoa-nut, the rubber plantations—there's no better rubber than Malay States' rubber, by the way—and consider the extent to which

these, together with gambier, tapioca, sago, nutmegs, areca-nuts, and all the rest, may be made to produce a more and more profitable yield. Let them notice the varied races living in peace and prosperity, and compare their condition with that of the Malays of thirty years ago, when murder and piracy were incessant on the coast; while you can imagine the continual state of fighting and bloodshed on the Peninsula, when I tell you that, on digging the foundations of Kuala Lumpor, the ground was found teeming with dead men's bones."

"But you yourself say," I interrupted, the first moment I got a chance.

"Yes, yes, I know," went on Joseph. "The administration certainly has rather an excessive passion for legislation. There is too much tendency to require passes and licences for everything. The native is beginning to look forward anxiously to a time when he will have to get a special licence to be allowed to 'makan angin'—take an airing, or, as it means literally, 'eat the air.' We Government officers also have our grievance. We live year in year out in a monotonous tropical climate, only a few degrees north of the Equator, with hardly any hill resorts to speak of, and are absolutely forced to go home to England for our health's sake every four years or so. Think of the expense of it. A return ticket home costs little short of £100, and we have to sell off all our belongings each time, as one can't warehouse things in a climate like this. Yet with all these drawbacks we're paid much less than civil servants in India, though very few have lived to draw pensions; and the F.M.S., for their size, are among the richest countries in the world, with savings amounting to fifteen million dollars, invested in the banks, Straits Settlements' municipalities, and other things."

I thought Joseph would go on all day once started off on a personal topic, so I turned his attention by complaining that the Sultan of Selangor did not live at headquarters. It was so inconsiderate of him to leave Kuala Lumpor without royalty of any sort. Joseph showed me his photograph by way of compensation, and told me that his dynasty was founded at the beginning of the eighteenth century by a Bugis chief from Celebes, one of whose descendants, named Raja Lumu, was created sultan by the Sultan of Perak in 1743. The anarchy and piracy that prevailed during the reigns of succeeding rulers were only put a stop to when, at the Sultan's own request, the country was taken under British protection.

In Selangor, as in the other Federated States, Malay officials, known as Penghulus, or village head-men, assist the British Government to collect the local taxes. One or more of the most influential Chinese traders join, with the Sultan of the State, the chief Malay rajas, and the principal British officials, in forming the State Council, which passes the laws and then submits them to the approval of the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State. A British officer holds a special position as Protector of the Chinese; and the "Capitan China," or head of the Chinese community, assists in the management of his countrymen. The other States are not quite so filled with Chinese, and Malays are more in evidence. The latter do not try to compete with the immigrant labouring classes. Travelling over Selangor one finds Bengali men driving the bullock-carts, Tamils at work on the roads, Javanese planting the gardens, Boyanese the best to look after horses, and the whole place might be called Further China for its multitudes from the Flowery Land. Chinese coolies by thousands are hard at work on the tin-mines; Chinese artisans are hard at work in the shops;

Chinese servants fill the Europeans' houses; Chinese "towkays," or merchants, build themselves fine residences; and Chinese joss-houses, theatres, and gambling-farms cover the length and breadth of the land. The servant class is principally composed of Haylams, natives of the island of Hainan; while most of the artisans and traders are the aggressively successful Cantonese who, according to Joseph, may be called appropriately the Aberdonians of the Far East.

As the Chinese arrive in ever-increasing numbers the Malays retreat farther into the jungle depths. A Malay is in his element on the water, and his superior is not to be met with in the management of boats. The chosen site for his "kampong" (settlement) is on a river's bank. There he clears away the jungle, builds his house raised on stakes above the ground, and plants his "pisang" (plantain) trees. Malays do not appreciate work. They prefer to bask in the sunshine and tell stories and make jokes. They are full of fun, and consider that life should be spent as pleasantly as possible, and seem to succeed in its enjoyment for the most part, unless anything happens to upset the mental equilibrium of one of them and he becomes "amok," or runs amuck, as the English express it, and makes things generally uncomfortable by trying to murder everybody he meets.

The drawback for the Malays is that, while they enjoy life, foreigners enjoy their country. The fortunes in tin, for instance, have hitherto been mostly made by Chinese; and there is more chance too for Europeans, now that mining by hydraulic power is being started, to minimise manual labour, as the management of Chinese coolies is seldom successfully undertaken by Englishmen. The processes commonly employed are so easy and unscientific that I could not avoid understanding them. The ore—for the most part alluvial, and generally

found from five to fifty feet below the ground—is excavated and the water pumped from the pits. The refuse soil is washed from the tin in sluices, after which the ore is usually sent to an island off Singapore, where the smelting works are the largest in the world. The mines, that cover so many parts of Selangor, by no means improve the scenery; but the tin itself is ornamental as well as useful, and the beautiful boxes and dishes and frames that are made in the Malay Peninsula would hardly condescend to claim relationship with the demoralised substance that is formed into the menial pots and pans of an English scullery.

It was quite disappointing to find that the old habits and customs in connection with the mines were gradually disappearing. In former times the Chinese miner called in a Malay “pawang” to prospect for tin. The pawang is a relic of the medicine man of bygone days. His office is often hereditary, and he has the honour and glory of a special regalia—the right to the use of the royal colour yellow, and his own private and particular set of expressions and words. He can fall into convenient trances, like a spiritualistic medium, and is held in more reverence than the imam (priest) attached to the mosque. His help is in demand in curing sick persons, in prospecting for metals, in trying to secure good harvests and plentiful fisheries—in fact, in making himself useful in every way—and he ensures popularity by enforcing many holidays as a means to good luck. There used to be many taboos in connection with tin mines: nobody was allowed near one with shoes on or an umbrella up; and limes and various other commodities were never to be brought into the vicinity, for fear of offending the spirits who take tin under their special care. The metal itself was thought to be alive, and capable of transferring itself to other places unless the greatest precautions were used.

"In fact," said Joseph, who dilated on the subject the first time he drove me out to a tin-mine, "to a Malay of the old order nothing is inanimate. He ascribes a sevenfold soul to man, and a living soul to every object in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. He apologises to the animal he is hunting, to the metal he is excavating, to the tree he is felling, as though they were conscious of his efforts to do the polite."

It was quite sad not to see more of such courteous inhabitants, but even the native quarter of Kuala Lumpur might have been imported direct from China, except for a few streets given over to Bengalis, who squatted on their haunches behind their wares. Even shops filled with Malay silks of pure native manufacture were mostly presided over by Chinese.

Mrs Freshcombe, a little bride who was our nearest neighbour, escorted me on my first visit to the native town. Under the Chinese sign-boards projecting from the houses, the yellow-skinned Celestials pushed and jostled, and had rather a family likeness to the animals that provide them with their favourite joint. One after another we passed the pawnshops, where we caught glimpses of fascinating jewellery and curiosities of all sorts. "Hammer, hammer, hammer," resounded from the tin shops where the metal was being welded into all sorts and conditions of designs. Here, in front of a silk shop, a little shrivelled-up owner sat smoking his opium pipe; there, outside a barber's, were Chinese having their heads shaved and their ears cleaned with silver instruments, this all-engrossing occupation being part of a barber's task. Some of the shopmen were having tiffin rather early, and were sitting round tables, and with chop-sticks and china spoons partaking of greasy fluids with submerged lumps of pork, finishing up with smelly delicacies, such

as decomposed prawns, sharks' fins, fishes' maws, and swallows' nests.

We were rather relieved to step into a darkened interior out of the glare and heat. We were at perfect liberty to examine all the shopman's possessions, but when it came to the point of making a purchase the difficulty began, as an anxiety to sell is considered "bad joss" by a Chinese salesman, and the fact that he should be supposed to wish to part with any of his belongings appears to meet with his profoundest contempt. "Tada" (not got), Mrs Freshcombe and I were assured repeatedly, while the object we asked for stared us full in the face.

Mrs Freshcombe was specially anxious to buy some blue Chinese crêpe. We went to one of the largest silk shops, where eight stout, scantily-clothed assistants were lounging at their ease.

"I want some blue crêpe," said Mrs Freshcombe in abrupt, decisive Malay. She addressed the remark generally to the assembled company, who pointedly declined to display the least interest in her wants.

She then went in turn to each of the eight fat assistants. "Have you any blue crêpe?" she asked.

"Ta' tau" (don't know), said each assistant with monotonous regularity.

I walked behind Mrs Freshcombe and converted myself into an echo. "Have you any blue crêpe?" I inquired.

"Ta' tau," said each salesman in turn.

We tramped in a circle round and round the eight till we began to feel giddy.

"This is ridiculous," said Mrs Freshcombe. "They have hundreds of yards of blue crêpe, you may depend."

"We don't seem likely to get any of them," I responded, with discouraging melancholy.

Mrs Freshcombe then delivered a short discourse

upon manners, or rather the want of them, with much fluency and such overwhelming inaccuracy that it might well have caused any Malay to turn in his sleep. It was powerless to affect Chinese. The eight assistants did not pretend to listen, and looked more and more apathetic and bored.

"What do you keep a shop for?" inquired Mrs Freshcombe.

"Ta' tau," the individual addressed said absently, thinking he had again been questioned as to the whereabouts of the blue crêpe.

"Ta' tau! I should think you did ta' tau," said Mrs Freshcombe, now highly indignant. "I'll teach you. You keep it for customers to help themselves. This is how they do it. Look here."

With much determination she stepped behind the counter, where rolls upon rolls of materials were beautifully done up in paper and piled one above the other right up to the roof. The shopmen looked faintly amused. One after another she pulled down the rolls, tore the paper off, and scattered silk and paper over the floor of the shop.

"My action is quite justifiable," she said to me as she did it. "These men are so abominably rude."

Amazement had succeeded apathy on the faces of the eight fat shopmen—in fact, they seemed too much astonished to interfere. Mrs Freshcombe was perfectly quiet and dignified over the operation, as she knew Chinese despised fluster and bluster above everything. When she made a thorough litter of silk and paper she returned from behind the counter. "That's what happens when I look for the crêpe," she said regretfully, and then, as though conferring a great favour, inquired, "Wouldn't you rather look for it yourselves?"

The eight fat shopmen hurried forward in a body,

pretending that at last they understood what was wanted, and displayed roll upon roll of the crêpe. They even insisted that Mrs Freshcombe should take away several pieces in her rickshaw so as to make sure of a proper choice. They evidently realised that, although it might be bad joss to attend to her, it would be worse joss not to do so, and consequently were completely transformed and became overwhelmingly polite.

All the same, Mrs Freshcombe and I decided that one needed to feel very strong and well to go shopping among Chinese. It was not only so difficult to choose things, but harder still when it came to the question of price. To begin with, in many of the shops there were workmen nailing, hammering, or otherwise making a noise. They had to be relieved of their instruments before it was possible to hear anybody speak. When the shopmen at last made themselves audible it was only to mention some sum four or five times the value of our would-be purchases; and though they had not the least expectation of getting what they demanded, the toil of diminishing prices was not reduced by that fact. It was particularly distracting when statements were corroborated on the abacus, as ordinary arithmetic had always been my bugbear, and it was positively overwhelming to be confronted by Chinese sums. Besides, I never could see the connection between a counting-board and an exorbitant price. Mrs Freshcombe grew rather nervous when I simplified transactions by halving or quartering the amounts, according to their requirements, laying down what I thought proper, and walking away with my purchase, regardless of the cries of "Mem! Mem! Hey! Hey!" with which I was pursued. Of course, when fair prices were asked there was no need for such high-handed behaviour; indeed, with some it would have been futile, for Chinese vary like

all men, and while some have to be commanded there are others who need to be coaxed. I soon made my special friends who gave me advice on all subjects, and brought their babies for my inspection—little hybrid creatures generally, for Chinese women are few and far between in the Malay States, and there is a good deal of match-making between Celestials and Malays, though these mixed marriages with infidels used to be an abhorrence to the Mohammedans, and until the British asserted their authority many a Chinese husband had the holy bands of matrimony abruptly severed by the point of a "kris."

Mrs Freshcombe was also the first to introduce me to the Europeanised Chinese shops, where the salesmen wore western garments and straw-hats or bowlers above their queues. European goods were chiefly supplied at what were supposed to be fixed prices, but it was quite as tedious to deal there, as the assistants scorned Malay, and in slow measured tones gave vent to the most laboriously grammatical and roundly finished English sentences, which took so long to utter that I had always forgotten the beginning by the time the speakers arrived at the end.

Such a strain to the memory made the afternoon siesta more than ever appreciable after a morning of noise and dust in the native town. It was a mercy to find Russian-bath conditions allowable for a short time in the Russian-bath atmosphere, and to feel oneself free to wear a Russian-bath costume, and stare lazily at the drowsy scenery which seemed to yawn and blink in the afternoon heat. But the momentous sixty minutes from five to six had a tiresome habit of arriving precipitately, and Joseph generally appeared with them and summoned me forth to tennis or croquet, or to play golf in the Lake Club gardens, or, better still, at the large links on the Pataling hills. These last served a

double purpose, as they were used as well as a Chinese burial-ground. Accommodating bunkers were made by the emptied graves from which bodies had been carried away for their final interment in China, as every Chinese, unless he has cut off his pig-tail and renounced his nationality, does his utmost to secure a last resting-place in the Celestial land.

One evening I positively declined to be energetic, and took Mrs Freshcombe instead for a drive. We came back by the Roman Catholic convent, surrounded by a Chinese garden, which we thought looked the reverse of conventual, as the creepers and flowers were twisted over wires into fantastic shapes of animals and men; and harmless roots of plants were trained to represent evil-looking serpents, though these perhaps were appropriate as constant reminders of the weakness of unfortunate Eve. A number of Malay and Chinese girls were being brought up as Roman Catholics by a kind-faced French missionary and some polite little French nuns. There are many converts to Roman Catholicism among the Chinese in the Peninsula, and altogether the Romanists have done much the most evangelising, though some other missions, especially the American Episcopalian Methodists, are beginning a great work. On the whole, the Church of England seems to have done least, and in some parts of the Federated States there is no clergyman to baptise the English children or bury the English dead. A church is seldom omitted, any more than a race-course or Government offices, from these New Empire cities, but what is so often needed is a suitable radiator of the light intended to illumine the dark places of the world. Mohammedanism has taught the Malays that there is one God, the Creator, "who pre-existed alone before He created the earth the width of a tray and the heavens the width of an umbrella." But Brahmanism, practised centuries

ago in the Peninsula, has left them with rather confused ideas of a multiplicity of Hindu divinities. Of these Shiva is the supreme, and is known as Batara Guru or Kala. They have, besides, a native folk-lore with innumerable legends and superstitions which, in spite of their pretty quaintness, must add rather to the cares and burdens of life. Mrs Freshcombe wondered how any one could say there was no message to be taken to the Malays when they had never been taught the great truths that nothing external can really harm us, for all we need fear is the darkness within us, which by following the perfect Example can be changed into radiance of light.

I drove Mrs Freshcombe away from the convent in the golden glory that followed the sundown, when little Malay children were hastily summoned indoors for fear of the yellow divinity that dwells in the sunset glow. In the native town lights were beginning to twinkle. The Chinese workmen still laboured as they would continue to do until far on into the night. With tom-toms banging and banners fluttering some religious procession passed noisily on its way. Bushranger jumped and swerved and raced us off to the Lake Club at a terrific pace. The yellow in the sky faded and the blue turned to purple overhead. A strange light still gleamed on the far horizon, and sheet-lightning danced like a will-o'-the-wisp across the distant hills. The club was rapidly filling. Carriages deposited their burdens. "Tiga, lima, d'lapan" (three, five, eight), the Chinese attendants in the billiard-room uttered in sepulchral voices to the click of the billiard-cues. The punkahs flapped wearily in the reading-room, where the ladies sat round a long table and fluttered the pages of picture papers, which they studied conscientiously week in week out, night after night. Some others sat at a small table playing bridge with great concentration, and

occasionally a man found his way to the door of the reading-room. He usually heard: "Well, ayah told me that baby—," or, "I gave the boy notice and ordered the tukang ayer—," and turned tail and fled at once. One or two were bold enough to venture to the long table and address particular women, when a dozen pairs of ears were all attention at once. That was the extent of the desperate flirtation which, according to so many novelists, is indispensable in tropical countries and all places where women have their turn at being rarities instead of men. On the whole, women are much less exalted than the stern sex at finding themselves in request, for they understand how easy it is to be run after when there are so few others to be chased, and indeed, if tender-hearted, are only sorry to give the trouble of so much unprofitable exercise. Of course there were secluded corners on the verandah for piquet couples, and propinquity brought about a few marriages and hatched many life-enduring friendships under the very eyes and ears of the most practised gossips that scavenged for scandal inside and outside the walls of a cock-and-hen club.

I left Mrs Freshcombe behind that particular evening and drove away by myself through the gardens, where there was chirruping, buzzing, and croaking to tell us that the insect world had awakened, and that the jungle dwellers would now start on their nightly prowls. Such a chorus of conversation made the drive seem pleasantly sociable, till a bull-frog with shocking manners roared at us round a corner and made Bush-ranger almost jump out of his skin.

Joseph and I had no engagement that evening, and as the lamp blazed like a furnace, and had a congregation of mosquitoes and flies round it, we wasted no time in escaping to our respective rooms and the security of mosquito-nets. There one curled under

blankets, for the nights had a sticky coolness, and the dampness of atmosphere and person made one susceptible to the slightest chill.

The night-jar outside hunted its meals with greedy insistence. "Tgok, tgok, tgok," came the sounds, which the Malays compare to a pestle pounding down in a mortar, and for this reason they believe that a woman who quarrelled with her mother was changed into a night-jar as a punishment when she was in the middle of husking rice by moonlight one night. It is an unsociable bird, which flies about in the evening giving vent to its grievances, and then banquets alone, showing no hospitality, and as it keeps very late hours, tries its best to prevent everybody else from enjoying beauty sleep. One of its idiosyncrasies is never to repeat its "tgok, tgok," the same number of times. I foolishly verified the statement by yielding to the fatal temptation of trying to count. "Tgok, tgok,"—two. "Tgok, tgok, tgok, tgok,"—five. "Tgok, tgok, tgok," three. "Tgok,"—one. "Tgok, tgok, tgok, tgok,"—four. "Tgok, tgok, tgok, tgok, tgok, tgok, tgok,"—at last merciful oblivion, until Joseph, looking everything unutterable in a sarong and baju—the Malay costume, folds of silk round the lower person and a short coat on the upper—stalked into my room to announce the advent of another day and the fact that he wished to make a proposal.

CHAPTER VI.

PERAK.

JOSEPH was given to proposals, but while they were only made to me, his sister, there was no danger in them. His last one was to the effect that he would like to escort me to Taiping, the capital of Perak, as a meeting for the widows' and orphans' fund had been arranged.

"The Taiping races are coming off, too," he added, by way of an after-thought.

He returned to the subject again that afternoon, and I objected that he had not the least prospect of possessing a widow and orphans so far as I could see. The Resident happened to be calling at the time, so I supposed that was why Joseph glared at me across the room.

"How do you know?" he asked. "Ten to one you'll see me with a widow and orphans before I'm dead. It would never do to miss this meeting anyway."

The Resident quite agreed. It was even possible that the meeting for the consideration of the widows' wellbeing had been appropriately arranged by him directly the date of the Taiping races had been fixed. Race meetings were held with the more enthusiasm, as gentlemen jockeys were not yet quite ousted by professionals. The Gymkhana Club procured most of the

mounts from Australia, and as pack-ponies could be conveniently secured in this way, the racing greed of some of the planters was quite voracious. It was not unusual for fifteen "griffins" to be on order for one man.

As Kuala Lumpor and Taiping were then unconnected by rail we had again to commit ourselves to the sea. The steamer by which we travelled carried four-legged as well as two-legged passengers—in fact, by far the larger number of its occupants were pigs. Each animal was packed separately in a round wicker-work basket, through which its legs and ears were generally sticking out. Hundreds of these baskets were laid side by side in tight rows, and placed above each other in layers three deep. There the poor creatures remained for hours and hours, exposed to sun or rain, their legs too often broken, and their only refreshment the ears of their companions, which they not only nibbled at but occasionally bit off.

"Now you see a pig in a poke," said Joseph. "Chinese must have pork to eat. How else could you carry the pigs?"

I thought that a very little ingenuity could suggest a number of different ways, and spent most of the night trying to discover and console a poor animal, whose squeals sounded even more piteous than the rest. In the morning the captain confessed that three or four had died during the night, which proved that the clamour had not been a mere case of much ado about nothing—the usual verdict passed upon the lamentations of a pig.

As a rule the steamer was punctually timed to miss the train at Teluk Anson. However, we so incited the captain to race a Chinese boat that we actually made the connection. The line runs past Batu Gajah, Ipoh, and the beautiful Perak hills, composed to a great

extent of crystalline limestone, much of which, in Joseph's opinion, compares favourably with Italian Carrara marble. There was much jungle opposition to this railway line. The system of trains so disgusted the elephants that one of them felt it his duty to interfere. He charged an engine travelling at full speed, and met with a martyr's death in his effort to frustrate civilisation, for his skull was broken and his trunk torn off. The battered remains of his head and his large tusks immortalise his memory in Taiping museum. When the engine-driver picked himself up he saw the last of the Chinese passengers disappearing along the line. They supposed the accident to be an ordinary incident of travel, and shouldered their burdens and walked on at once, so as to waste no time. Later on another elephant followed his predecessor's example, but stupidly charged the train sideways, so that he wreaked no vengeance upon it, but only got his foot badly crushed in the attempt. He rolled into a ditch, and was shot by the guard of the following train.

Not content with these unsought adventures the railway officials also originated a few, as the Sultan proved to his cost. When he was first introduced to a train he was invited to step on to the engine, so as to examine it as much as he liked. This opportunity could not be wasted by the canny Scotch engine-driver, who immediately started off, full steam ahead, and only condescended to stop when the terrified potentate had promised him all his heart's desires. His wisdom over-reached itself, however, for he omitted to take into consideration that if he lost his employment it would be impossible for the Sultan to keep his word.

The dream of the future is to connect Singapore with Burma by rail, and eventually accomplish an overland

route from London to Singapore. In 1903 a main trunk line was opened for traffic from Prai in Province Wellesley to Seremban in Negri Sembilan, and the extension is now under construction. The sum total of the distance which it is expected will very soon be covered, and which includes the recently-opened line on Singapore island, is estimated at about 480 miles. But at the close of the nineteenth century these lines were for the most part only in contemplation, and at that time, when travelling to Taiping from Teluk Anson, we had to part company with the train at Enggor. Now the express rushes through without stopping, and the Malays call it the "creta sumbong," or proud carriage, because it will not condescend to notice the small stations on the way.

There was no such superior object to convey us, unfortunately. All Enggor could provide was a single gharri. A wedding at Kuala Kangsar was said to be monopolising the services of all the rest. Joseph was independent, as he had brought his bicycle, and as the other passengers were men, and had to do the polite, even if not the least anxious to, the gharri was relinquished to me. But this did not solve the question of the "barang" (luggage), which in no way corresponded with the minute proportions of the solitary vehicle. One entire wall of Joseph's bedroom at Kuala Lumpur was covered from top to bottom with white canvas shoes. To the naked eye no difference was distinguishable between any two pairs, but as Joseph considered such microscopic variety a necessity for his mere feet, his luggage naturally could not avoid being plentiful. My own also pleaded guilty, as Joseph had impressed upon me the advisability of being well equipped for the social doings of Taiping. Almost all these precious possessions had to be intrusted to the

tender mercies of a sampan on the Perak river, accompanied by passionate exhortations that they must be made to reach Taiping in time. Everything that could be stowed into the gharri I kept with me, and as there were numerous articles from which Joseph would not be parted, there was hardly any room left for me by the time the things were all in. However, the pony was sturdy, so no qualms were needed on his behalf, but I had a great many on my own when we drew up on the middle of a long bridge, the other half of which was detached, and swinging about in a desultory way close up to the opposite bank of the river. The two halves made a whole eventually; and that danger over, I tried to study the rich Perak scenery, my efforts much frustrated by the sides of a Gladstone bag and the projecting corner of a large hat-box. There was positively no room even to fan oneself. Joseph could just manage to poke fruit through the window occasionally. It was all of the most novel interesting kinds, and made me disbelieve the assertion that Queen Victoria had tasted every known fruit. Let alone the chiku, duku, rambei, langsat, mangosteen, &c., &c., of the Malay Peninsula, I felt certain that she had never even smelt, much less eaten, a durian. Before it is pulled from the tree it sheds an unholy odour over the atmosphere. When it is partaken of fresh it is like indulging in ambrosia over a sewer, and when left to lie about stale in a market that market becomes impassable to any but an Asiatic nose. So, had a durian ever travelled home to Queen Victoria, Windsor borough, let alone the Castle, would have been uninhabitable for some time. It is a large fruit, with a green outer covering, and inside white pulpy divisions that taste of almonds, garlic, sherry, cheese, and endless other flavours combined indiscriminately. During the

journey we restricted ourselves to less odoriferous refreshment, and put the Malay couplet into effect :—

“Musim buah sudah sampei,
Kita makan buah rambei.”

(“The fruit season’s come by,
So let us eat rambei.”)

We stopped at Kuala Kangsar for the very forcible reason that the gharri wallah declined to take me another step. He insisted that the wedding-party claimed his further services, and so turned me out at the district officer’s bungalow, promising to send a substitute at once. The “at once” came to pass after a period of some hours; but we did not mind much, as Kuala Kangsar is one of the prettiest places in the Federated States. The Sultan of Perak has his “astana” (palace) there, and though Taiping is the headquarters of Perak officialdom, Kuala Kangsar is the royal capital. It has lately gained still more in importance through the acquirement of a residential college for the up-to-date education of Malays. Unfortunately, the scholars put in an appearance sooner than the school, and the future sultans of the Malay Peninsula were reduced to learning their lessons in a fowl-house.

There were no evidences of seminaries when we sat on the verandah of the district officer’s bungalow and looked out over the beautiful Perak river, so closely associated with Malay history and anecdote. Roughly speaking, it is the dividing line of the two aboriginal tribes of the Peninsula. Those on the west are known as the Semangs. They generally use bows and arrows; while the Sakais on the east use blow-pipes, with arrows dipped in the poisonous sap of the upas-tree. In the same way the two species of gibbon apes—the siamangs and the wa-was—have kept to the same boundary

ever since a bloodthirsty battle which, according to legend, they fought many many years ago. The beautiful river, where the Sultan takes the royal ladies for water-parties, has its own special British hero, the first Resident, appointed in 1874 to restore order in the country after a period of fighting, when the Chinese had been quarrelling together and the Malays disputing about the succession to the throne. In a little floating bath-house opposite Pasir Salak the Resident was stabbed to death by the Malays; and the pacification and wellbeing of the whole Peninsula were the indirect results of the murder, for nothing short of it would have made the authorities bestir themselves. So at Taiping, on the 2nd November, the Union Jack hangs at half-mast in memory of the fearless martyr of Empire, James Wheeler Woodford Birch.

Our host's servants had scoured Kuala Kangsar in every direction before the advent of another gharri brought our stay there to an end. This conveyance was larger, but the pony was diminutive.

"You have evidently mistaken my gharri for a bullock-cart," observed the driver with withering sarcasm, as one after another our possessions were produced.

We ignored his comment, though I begged Joseph to tell him to drive slowly on account of the heavy load. Joseph did not deliver the message, and it certainly was not necessary, for a slower progress could not possibly have been made. Every few steps the pony's knees came out of joint, and it had to pause to click them in again. The gharri was in a most battered condition; and as it shook and swayed, the packages inside tumbled backwards and forwards and bumped me black and blue. It was a relief to scramble out and walk through the beautiful Bukit Barapit Pass. So far Joseph had managed to restrain his impatience, but

when I returned to the gharri he politely suggested that he should go ahead and make preparations for me in Taiping.

"You can't be long now," he said with hypocritical encouragement. "Bye, bye."

This was meant as an expression of farewell, not as a literal exhortation, for to go to sleep under such conditions seemed beyond human possibility. Evening set in, followed by a starless night of inky blackness. The darkness loomed above, below, around us like an impenetrable wall. Every few yards the lamps went out, so that when the pony had clicked its joints into place and was able to crawl forwards, it had instantly to be checked while the lamps were lighted again. To pass the time I made drowsy guesses as to whether the lamps or the pony's knees were responsible for each particular pause. The Gladstone bag, the hat-box, and innumerable packages bumped vigorous lullabies on my back and shoulders and arms. Kind oblivion stole over me. Jolted and shaken in that Perak gharri I actually slept. Suddenly all the boxes and bags bounced at me in a body. I woke to find myself nearly jammed through one window, while the other had assumed an extraordinary attitude straight above my head. A moment later it descended below me, sharp edges and pointed corners ran into me all over, and I was reduced to standing on my head. Again there was another mighty upheaval. Again the windows changed places, and my position was reversed. Clutching frantically about me in the darkness, I grabbed at—nothing. The gharri had miraculously emptied itself. One more violent jolt, and then—the driver drove on placidly, as though nothing whatever had happened, regardless of my demands for an explanation and frantic questioning as to the whereabouts of the vanished property. Fortunately the pony had to stop to readjust its knees, and then I discovered the Gladstone bag,

hat-box, and the many etceteras lying disconsolately all over the road. We rescued them by the light of a flickering lantern which a passer-by was carrying, and by it could also distinguish a series of gravel-heaps by the roadside, which explained why our recent progress had resembled a switchback-railway trip. But the outskirts of Taiping were actually reached, so there was no use in wasting time over the contemplation of past perils. About twenty minutes later I hobbled on to the Residency verandah just as Joseph emerged from the dining-room, the picture of contentment, smoking a cigarette.

"Oh! here you are," he said benignly. "I've just had dinner. I'd quite given you up."

We had left Kuala Kangsar at four, and it was now past ten o'clock, so I forgave him, as I could hardly have expected him to wait any longer; but I felt at that moment that the trunk railway and the express train, which the Malays now consider so haughty, would indeed be a boon and a blessing when in proper working trim.

The race meeting was not exactly restful after such an agitating journey. The course was a fine one, the view of the hills very pretty; but to be out dressed up, booted and gloved, during the heat of the day was a trial in Taiping, where the climate more than ever resembles a Turkish or, more accurately, a Russian bath.

The Sultan, a ferret-faced, bright-eyed man, was present with many of the court ladies, whose large-eyed pretty faces peeped out from under their white head-dresses. The handsomest was a rather older sultana, although the flight of years, according to Malay notions, had left her quite in the shade. A Malay girl generally marries at eleven or twelve. She is considered *passée* at twenty, middle-aged at twenty-five, and an old woman at thirty. It must be hard to be put on the shelf so early; but who knows? Any sort of seat

must be more restful than a breathless scurry after vanishing youth. The royal ladies were all finely made and good-looking. Indeed, most Malay women have pleasing faces and large, dark, mysterious eyes. The rights of women are not talked about, but are practised in many ways. It is a common occurrence for property to be bequeathed in the female line; and the ladies know how to guard their own interests, and have their power of repartee and alertness of comprehension kept in constant practice by their fondness for double meanings and customary play upon words.

The change of the old order was very apparent as the Sultan moved unostentatiously through the crowd. Nowhere has an eastern potentate been more regarded in the light of a demi-god than in the Malay Peninsula. The power "to slay at will without being guilty of a crime" has been accorded to him. Not only is his body considered sacred, but that sanctity is communicated to his regalia, to touch or even copy any of which is supposed to draw down death or disaster upon the offender. It would exhaust one to try to enumerate all the royal prerogatives. The king's divine attributes are believed to influence nature and the success or failure of the crops. Pardon has to be entreated for daring to mention the royal name; and when the monarch eats, sleeps, resides, progresses, bathes, is sick, dies, &c., special words must be used to describe the processes, for the ordinary linguistic terms in use among the people may never be applied to the sacred ruler of the state. Some attributes of the sovereign are now ascribed to the British officials, and public misfortunes are occasionally accounted for by the absence of a Resident or a District officer from the scene of his work.

"More complimentary than ascribing them to his presence," Joseph observed.

"But is it as true?" I inquired, for I felt annoyed with Joseph. When the races were over he started off on a shooting expedition instead of initiating me into the manners and customs of the Malays.

The jungle is so thick that the difficulties in the way of sport are many, though the Peninsula teems with birds and beasts of every kind—snipe, argus pheasant, teal, deer, bears, tigers, rhinoceros, elephants, and—most exciting sport of all—a species of bison known as *sladang*. Joseph wrote an account of how he came upon a tiger eating the remains of a bear; but though this was interesting zoologically, I should have preferred him to teach me to "*meng-gelunchor*," a Perak amusement which consists of tobogganing down a waterfall into a pool at the bottom, quite regardless of bruises and accidents. Some of the English indulge in this pastime, although its characteristics seem Asiatic; but adaptability after all is essential to colonisation.

I stayed on at the Residency to make more acquaintance with Taiping and its beautiful lake, and its background of mountain-ranges of the vivid deep-blue shades that give such a wonderful effect to all views in the Malay Peninsula. Close by was Taiping Hill, on top of which the Resident and Resident-General both have bungalows, and at the foot a disused tin-mine growing picturesque in its old age. There were the golf links, the club, the pawnshops, all to be visited; and a fine museum, which treasured several Chinese instruments of torture, such as a bed of wood covered with pointed spikes, and a chair with sharp blades for the seat, head-rest, foot-rest, and arm supports. There was a large collection of stuffed animals of the Peninsula, and all sorts of native curiosities, including a bottle containing three pearls and a little rice from which fresh pearls were supposed to emanate. There was some beautiful Malay silver,

long finger-tips worn by the dancing-girls and silver finger-nail guards. There were silver pillow ends used at weddings, sweetmeat covers, chased silver caskets for henna, and the beautiful gold chains of fragile workmanship, which are becoming very rare and precious accordingly.

The Perak Government had just had a cheery little present of two hundred coffins for the use of dead patients in the Government hospital. A wealthy Chinese had given them as a thank-offering for a son and heir with which he had just been blessed after a married life of twenty-two years. As the chief advantage of a son to a Chinese is the safeguard he should make to the spiritual interests of his defunct parent, there was nothing at all incongruous to the Celestial mind in this funereal outburst of joy. I knew it would have delighted Joseph, but he had already returned to Selangor, and I soon followed him, travelling by sea from Port Weld, at the mouth of the Larut river, on a little vessel which had the encouraging reputation of not being in the least seaworthy. The man at the wheel was Malay, and so, no doubt, were the rest of the seamen, but as a matter of fact no others were in obtrusive attendance. All went well under lee of the land until we had passed the fishing village at the point where the houses stood on poles above water bristling with stakes that formed ingenious fish-traps. Then, without an instant's warning, a huge wave slapped the vessel on the beam and hurled itself convulsively over us. I tumbled down the companion-way as the only alternative to being washed over the bulwarks, and the remainder of that voyage could not be described as a quest of the ideal. Travellers may, on the whole, congratulate themselves that nowadays the journey from Taiping to Kuala Lumpor, the Federal capital, can be more simply accomplished by rail.

CHAPTER VII.

KUALA LUMPUR.

THE Federated Malay States go in for monopoly in talent. They supply a belle, a villain, an actor, a musician, a golfer, and everybody and everything else that modern society can possibly have need of, especially a guardian of morals (Mrs Retale), who shakes her head and draws attention to any one who shows the remotest prospect of ever entertaining her neighbours by wrong-doing of some sort. Mrs Retale is consequently held in much reverence by some of her acquaintances, though others are base enough to suggest that it must take a great deal of personal experience to be so very well up in the premonitory symptoms of transgression.

Mrs Freshcombe owned to an intense feeling of awe for Mrs Retale. Mrs Freshcombe, as I have already stated, was a bride who had only lately arrived. She confided to me that she had accepted her husband in England in a hail-storm. He had offered her himself and his umbrella simultaneously. The latter was a necessity at the moment, so she was under the obligation of accepting the former as well. Both were so snug and cosy on that chilly occasion. She had never dreamt that the temporary comfort and warmth could lead to such permanent discomfort and heat. For Mrs Freshcombe suffered greatly from the climate, from

fever, from mosquitoes, and from longings for that old England which she could only hope to see again at rare intervals during the course of the next twenty years. For Mrs Freshcombe was a real helpmate. She did not believe in a man being tied to a woman who resided on the opposite side of the globe. Like most other brave people she suffered in silence, but on one unhappy occasion her misfortunes were not borne with the fortitude she usually displayed, and, as a matter of fact, Mrs Retale deserved the entire blame. Mr Freshcombe was "Government punya," and his official occupations often took him away from Kuala Lumpur. On these occasions his great friend, Nipis, used to do his utmost to cheer and amuse the bride. This arrangement suited every one concerned, till one day Mrs Freshcombe came and informed me that Mrs Retale chose to object.

"Really?" I said. "And are you interested in her objections?"

But Mrs Freshcombe was not of opinion that Mrs Retale could be treated with levity.

"Nipis has asked me to go for a drive, but I'm afraid I mustn't. You see there's only room for two in the trap. We might go for a walk though, because then you can come too. That will make it all right. Mrs Retale will think that I am chaperoning you, or at any rate that you are chaperoning me."

I thought either point of view too uninteresting to enter Mrs Retale's head, and the Malay climate did not inspire me with a desire for walking exercise. However, Mrs Freshcombe was so persuasive that I agreed to join her and Nipis at five o'clock. It was nearly dark before we actually started, as Mrs Freshcombe thought there was a chance of her husband returning that evening, and a good deal of arguing was involved before she could decide upon the road

by which he was most likely to come. After walking some way, sure enough we met him riding towards us, and were not at all certain that he appreciated our attention in going to meet him, as it obliged him to dismount and walk back slowly with us. He went on ahead to discuss official matters with Nipis. Mrs Freshcombe and I followed behind.

It was too dark now to see where we were stepping. I devoutly congratulated myself that I was not alone in the jungle. A Malay came after us and seemed glad to walk near us. All the "hantus" (ghosts) of his native superstitions were abroad now. Perhaps he feared any moment to hear the whirring wings of the birik-birik birds, supposed to portend misfortune and announce that the "Hantu Pemburu" (the Spectre Huntsman) is travelling overhead. The Spectre Huntsman once upon a time was a man who mistook a request his wife made him and set out upon an impossible hunting quest. He has continued to hunt with his face turned skyward, his pack of dogs round him, and the birik-birik birds flying in his train. Or the owl hooting on the tree-top might be the "Langsuir," the spirit of the woman who died from shock on hearing that her baby was born dead, and who in revenge sucks the blood of all the little children she can find. Perhaps the Malay believed the owl might be transformed as she perched on the bare branch, and that he would see the Langsuir in visible presence, with her fluttering green garments, her long tapering finger-nails, and her masses of jet-black hair. He gave a start—we all did—at a sudden piercing shriek.

"Oh! Help! help!" screamed Mrs Freshcombe. "Something awful is twisting round my leg."

Mr Freshcombe and Nipis turned round, but far quicker than they the Malay sprang to Mrs Freshcombe, seized her skirt in one hand, and with the

other grasped a gruesome black thing that wriggled and squirmed.

Mr Freshcombe could not understand what was happening. "Suir! binatang!" (pig, beast), he shouted, and knocked down the unfortunate Malay. The birik-birik birds had evidently flown past that evening,—the poor Malay must have thought so at any rate. Nipis was quicker than the indignant husband in grasping both the situation and the snake. It was not till he had killed the latter that Mr Freshcombe really understood.

"My darling, did it bite you?" he cried.

"I'm afraid so," his wife answered feebly. "I'm sure I felt a prick."

"Nipis, hurry in. Get everything ready,—brandy, whisky, gin and tonic,—everything you can think of. Fetch the doctor. Be quick."

Nipis vanished like a streak of lightning. Mr Freshcombe put his wife on his horse and jumped up behind her. I hurried after them, regardless of the darkness and the jungle and the hantus, carrying the dead snake by its clammy tail.

A most animated scene took place at the Freshcombes'. Whisky, gin, and any other available spirit had been poured promiscuously down Mrs Freshcombe's throat. She, poor woman, having been brought up on strict temperance principles, was suffering accordingly.

"She mustn't be allowed to go to sleep," Mr Freshcombe insisted.

Mrs Freshcombe was in an exceedingly lively condition, and showed not the least symptom of sleepiness, but in spite of that her husband forced her to tramp up and down. But this did not content him. He rushed to his room and returned with a large jungle-knife and commenced to chop pieces out of her ankle. I remonstrated. So did she loudly.

"Have you been through an ambulance course?" Mr Freshcombe asked me severely.

"No, I haven't," I owned.

"Well, then, I have, so, please, don't interfere."

He rubbed some concoctions into the wound in the pride of his unimpeachable first-aid experience, and made his victim beside herself with pain as well as with spirits. When the doctor arrived she absolutely declined to look at him, and mistook Nipis for her husband, and addressed him in tender terms that would have made Mrs Retale's hair stand on end. Whenever she grew quieter she was forced to walk up and down. Far on into the night we assisted at those agitating promenades. The first thing next morning I went round to inquire. The chief naturalist of the States—in consequence known as "Binatang" (the insect)—had arrived to hold an inquest over the snake.

"Perfectly harmless," he announced, and reeled off a list of its scientific and local names.

This was poor consolation to Mrs Freshcombe, who was laid up with an attack of blood-poisoning, and said she could not feel comforted by hearing that it had only been caused by unnecessary precautions against an imaginary bite. Mrs Retale, of course, heard every detail of the adventure. "Just what I prophesied," she lamented. "If young women will be so imprudent, what else can they expect?" But in Nipis' opinion she ought to have paid the doctor's bill.

I invited Binatang to dinner by way of diverting his scorn from poor Mr Freshcombe. He came. As snakes were naturally the order of conversation he was in his element. When dinner was over he passed on to mosquitoes. I learnt that it is only the lady mosquito which stings, and the mosquito which dispenses malarial fever looks as if it wore socks on its feet.

Joseph grew restive and fidgeted. Binatang pro-

ceeded to give me the genealogy of all the insect legions which garrison the Malay States.

Joseph got up and went out on to the verandah and began to walk up and down. Binatang then commenced the personal history of each separate insect. During a moment's pause I started a reminiscence of my own in the hope that it might interrupt.

"When I was a child in Ceylon," I said, "I remember I once saw a fly dodging about in the most eccentric way near a bank. I looked closer and saw a big spider just opposite. Whichever way the fly moved the spider turned its head. They went bobbing from side to side like two people trying to pass on a pavement."

"Capital! capital!" cried Binatang, clapping his hands. "It was one of the Ichneumon tribe—a mason fly, probably. They all make their dinners off spiders. If you'd looked longer you'd have seen the fly suddenly strike the spider a blow—a blow on the head. Three times the fly would strike the spider. The third time the spider would fall down motionless. Then what do you think happened? What did that fly want?" Binatang pulled his chair up in his excitement and dropped his voice to a confidential whisper. "The fly had a hole close by. It lived there with its family. What did it want for that family?"

I confessed I had no idea.

"Why, of course, it naturally wanted fresh meat. What did it need to put in its pantry? Why, of course, fresh meat—fresh meat! It had hypnotised the spider—hypnotised it there and then. When the spider was in the hypnotic trance the fly dragged it into its hole. When dinner-time came and the children were hungry, why, of course, they had fresh meat—fresh meat, of course! Good housekeeper—fine joint—fresh meat!"

Joseph looked through the curtains at me threaten-

ingly, and stalked round the verandah putting out the lights.

"Ah! I could tell you no end of good stories. Plenty of insect gossip. Terrible scandalmongers, you know, flies."

But I lost the thread of the observations of the Mrs Retale of the insect race, for Joseph, in a determined way, was putting out all the lamps in the dining-room. My attention returned to Binatang. He was lamenting the injustice done to the toad, that invaluable gardener which has suffered as basely from calumnies in the Malay Peninsula as in all other parts of the world.

Joseph marched into the drawing-room and put out the lights round the walls. Binatang continued unconscious.

"I say, what's the time? Past twelve, isn't it?" asked Joseph, making a great display of his watch.

"No doubt, no doubt," said Binatang, and resumed his regrets on behalf of the toad.

Joseph paused. He hesitated. Then out went the last remaining lamp.

"Excuse my hurrying away. I said I'd get back early," jerked out Binatang, and he groped in the darkness for my hand. He knocked down a chair, upset a vase on a table, and finally we heard him stumbling down the steps.

"Joseph," I said, "your manners are beyond comment."

"Yes; I thought you'd admire them," said Joseph. "If you don't know how to get rid of a fellow, I jolly well think it's a tactful idea of mine to get the lights to give him a hint."

Joseph had now placed me in the humiliating position of needing to propitiate Binatang. Under the circumstances I thought it necessary to undertake the guardianship of his bear while he was away. "You could cheer

up the poor fellow," he had suggested. "He'll be so bored otherwise." "Oh, that would never do," I answered, for in my opinion no one should enslave birds and animals unless he can give them a thoroughly good time. But I confess I should not have offered the bear hospitality had it not been that I felt Joseph's behaviour entitled Binatang to some amends on my part.

I went to fetch the animal, having first secured Mrs Retale as chaperone, so that if she had any stories to tell she would have to include herself in the theme. Her husband—one of the judicial lights of the Government—came too, and we set out together to tea at the Chummery, where Binatang lived. Creatures of all descriptions and ages crowded the verandah outside his room. Binatang pulled a baby otter out of his waistcoat-pocket. It chirruped like a chicken when he left it alone while he hunted for his pet mongoose, which had disappeared under the house. Suddenly the young black bear rushed helter-skelter upon us. He charged Mr Retale, who jumped on to his chair with more haste than dignity.

"Don't be so silly, Philip," said his wife. "Come here, you darling" (to the bear). "Oh, do come here, you sweet pet."

"Don't touch it, Lulu," cried Mr Retale, prancing up and down so violently that he came through the seat of the chair. "If you love me, you'll leave it alone for my sake."

"*I will* touch it," said Lulu defiantly.

Fortunately Binatang caught the mongoose and returned to the verandah, and with great strategy backed the bear into his cage. For the next ten minutes no one heard a syllable that was spoken, owing to the roared protests of the animal when he discovered the trick. However, Binatang was only explaining that

"bruang" was the Malay for bear, and that this black sort which climbs trees to get honey from the beehives was the only known species in the Peninsula. He told us that the Malays believed the bear to have been originally a woman, nurse to a certain Princess Telan, whose *fiancé* insisted upon sailing the high seas instead of fulfilling his marriage-contract. Meantime the princess used to change into a monkey to escape the unwelcome attentions of the truant's brother. At last the *fiancé* turned into a fish to avoid further complications. Binatang did not explain why he could not have married the lady: that really would seem to have been a more simple arrangement. As it was, the princess was turned permanently into a siamang, one of the species of gibbons, and her nurse was changed into a bear. The transformation took place while the two were bathing, so both still carry soap-marks which they did not have time to wash off. Binatang pointed out white patches on the chest and snout of Bruang, whose roaring had subsided at last.

"He's as gentle as a baby," said Binatang. "He'd do anything for a bit of sugar or a little jam. The more freedom you give him the better he will behave."

This was not Joseph's opinion. He gave strict orders that Bruang was to be chained in the servants' quarters, and that under no pretext whatsoever was he to be admitted into the house. This was all very well, but I did not find the back premises the pleasantest of places for entertaining my new guest. Chinese servants are very kind to animals usually, but servants have duties: ours had too many to play with Bruang all day. I spent a week continually interrupting myself at other occupations to pay duty calls and administer jam to the bear, until, in an ardour of sympathy, I decided to disregard Joseph's commands. I thought there could be no harm in bringing Bruang into my own room, as

I should be the only sufferer if he did any damage there. I might not have ventured upon this had Ah Song been present, but he happened to be away for his holiday, and his place was temporarily filled by a worthless substitute.

Bruang appreciated my room. He behaved in the most gentle kittenish way, and so fully endorsed the good character his master had given him that I decided to take Binatang's advice and give the bear full liberty. I took off his chain, and told him to come for a walk on the verandah. He obeyed, and followed close at my heels abjectly docile and good. All went well till we reached the door of the dining-room. Then, in the gushing tactless way of a half-caste, Lord Huntrabbit—the misshapen animal Nipis had given me—rushed up to greet this new acquaintance, and was so rough that he knocked Bruang flat on the ground. The bear picked himself up and made desperate grimaces as a warning, but Huntrabbit would not take the hint. He bounced against Bruang again. Bruang sprang at him, roaring, and then rushed panic-stricken into the dining-room. Here to his delight he discovered an excellent opportunity for satisfying his climbing proclivities, for a firm-legged table stood in a corner, covered with a beautiful Japanese tea-service which Joseph reserved for show instead of for use. Without waste of time Bruang set to work to climb the legs of the table. A bull in a china shop could not be worse than a bear climbing over a tea-service. In desperation I seized the animal by the scruff of the neck and dragged him down without ceremony. My method was more forcible than polite, I am certain; but I never saw such a shocking exhibition of temper as that bear displayed. He distended his long claws and curled his lips back over his great fangs, and roared with such utter loss of self-control that I thought the whole of Kuala Lumpur

DAY OF



"FETCH JAM!" I CRIED.

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would hear, and that I should have Joseph rushing up to know what was wrong. Again Bruang made a dash for the legs of the table. Again I pulled him down and pushed him across the room. He sprang at me, longing to tear me with his claws, and once more began the ascent of the table. I caught hold of him and called wildly to the boy. He ran into the room, but instead of helping only added shrill shrieks to Bruang's roars; and when the bear shook himself free and charged me, he jumped so high in the air that I really thought he would never come down again. Fortunately the tukang ayer now arrived as cool and collected as a Chinaman ought to be. "Fetch jam!" I cried, again dragging the bear away from the legs of the table. The tukang ayer ran off and the next moment returned with a pot of some specially good guava jelly, of which Joseph was particularly fond. The bear devoured the whole of it, to Joseph's infinite disgust when he discovered its loss, and in consequence learnt all the facts of the episode at breakfast next day.

"Boy, bring the guava jelly at once. Why don't you put it on the table?"

"Missie fed bear with it yesterday. All gone, Tuan."

There is nothing that more pleases an Oriental servant than to make the unfortunate Mem or the Missie the scapegoat for all that goes wrong.

However, the guava jelly played its part nobly, for I might have been torn to pieces if it had not come to my help. As it was, we were able to chain the bear, and then and there the tukang ayer marched him back to Binatang's verandah to content himself with the society of an iguana, a mongoose, a civet-cat, a bull-frog, and various races of mosquitoes—the mosquito that inoculates malarial fever, the mosquito that inoculates elephantiasis, and so on through genus and species.

Next morning Ah Song's useless substitute called "Boy! boy!" in the back premises in imitation of my appeals for help. I waited till he came to the drawing-room, then I said innocently, "Who wants you, boy? I've heard some one keep on calling you. You must find out who it is." For the next half-hour I cheerfully encouraged the substitute in a vain search through the rooms, down the porch, all over the verandahs and road. He did not love me the better for being thoroughly aware that no one would have been more astonished than I, had he found any one actually clamouring for him. But he never again attempted to mimic me.

Joseph seemed to wish to demonstrate practically the inadvisability of promiscuous pets. A few days later he came in to tiffin with what looked like a shining green ribbon twisted tight round his arm. The green ribbon had a head, I soon discovered, and brilliant red rubies for eyes—in fact, it looked altogether more like a piece of jewellery than anything else. So at least I thought till Joseph curled it round a silver ornament on the centre of the table and I found myself *vis-à-vis* with a snake. That was too much for my nerves, but Joseph grew very scornful when I declined to go on with tiffin.

"You turn a house into a bear-garden and a bear into a table ornament. Why can't I have a snake for a centre-piece? They're perfectly harmless, these grass snakes."

I told Joseph that if he had paid more attention the other night he would have heard Binatang tell us there were two sorts of these green snakes—one harmless, the other deadly. I knew Joseph had no idea which he had caught. Ten to one it was the deadly sort. "Any way," I said, "I'm not in Eden, and if I were, I hope I'd have the sense not to eat with the serpent."



HE JUMPED SO HIGH IN THE AIR.

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Fortunately the controversy was settled by the snake. It suddenly descended from the table and wriggled out of the house with a slithery determination that admitted of no argument.

A pause was in store for me in life's pleasures and trials at Kuala Lumpor. An invitation came for me from Seremban, the capital of Negri Sembilan, and it was arranged that I should spend a few days on the way at Port Dickson with the Freshcombes, who had gone there for change of air. There was plenty to settle, with no Ah Song to help me. It was humiliating to find what a mental prop one could make of an efficient Chinese boy. "Well, what wobble is your mind at now?—hat wobble? dress wobble? shoe wobble?"—was the only assistance I received from Joseph when I went to him for advice. Without being of the slightest use, he had a superior way of appearing to settle everything—a way which inferred objectionably that I was incapable of managing for myself.

"I've arranged for you to leave by the *Ban Whatt Hin* next Monday," he announced grandiloquently, as though he had chartered a special steamer on purpose to carry me. "You'll get to Port Dickson at five on Tuesday morning. You'll have the whole of Tuesday and Wednesday at Port Dickson; on Thursday you can go on to Seremban."

"Not really? How good of you."

"Well, I've taken the trouble to settle everything and make it all easy for you," said Joseph reproachfully.

"Don't you think," I suggested, "that I'd better make sure about the steamer myself?"

"Oh, of course," said Joseph. "You've been here for some months. I've only been here for years. Naturally you'll know more about it all."

His feelings seemed so hurt that I desisted from further inquiry. When the aforesaid Monday arrived

I started for Kuala Lumpor station, *en route* for the *Ban Whatt Hin* and Port Dickson, Joseph escorting me as far as the railway carriage. My smaller belongings were placed inside. I took my seat beside them. There were several passengers in the compartment.

"Good day," said one. "Going to pay Klang a visit?"

"Oh, no. I'm going straight through on the *Ban Whatt Hin* to Port Dickson."

"I'm afraid you're not. The *Ban Whatt Hin's* off her run. Been in dry-dock for repairs the last month."

"What boat takes her place?" I inquired with rapt attention.

"No boat. There's nothing that'll carry you to Port Dickson till next Thursday."

"Take my things out," I commanded, and, seizing my dressing-bag and sun-umbrella, I began to back out of the train.

Joseph had comprehended the spirit, if not the text, of the recent conversation. I suppose he was in no special hurry to listen to my criticisms on his arrangements.

"Get in! get in!" he cried. "Train's just off. Get in," and he pushed me in forwards as I tried to jump out backwards. Off went the train in real earnest, and I was launched forth on my wild-geese chase.

CHAPTER VIII.

TO PORT DICKSON AND SEREMBAN.

IF Joseph thought I was going to take the hot journey to Klang simply to return by the next train he was never more mistaken in his life. Having been forced into starting, I was bent upon arriving, and had my swimming capabilities surpassed one stroke above water and two under, I should almost have tried to reach Port Dickson independently on my own account. I inquired eagerly whether there might not be a junk, or even a sampan, which could take me, but I only met with negative replies.

"A boat starts to-morrow afternoon for Malacca," some one at last suggested. "It won't stop at Port Dickson, but you might get a Chinese boat at Malacca to take you back there."

This arrangement, however, did not solve the problem of where I should spend the night which was looming in my immediate future, and an ignominious return to Kuala Lumpor seemed more and more inevitable. A planter, as he left the train at his station, filled my lap with comic papers; but even this hint to revive my drooping spirits was entirely thrown away.

At last a man in the far corner of the carriage sat forward and said, "I've been making plans to help you ever since we left Kuala Lumpor. I've hit upon one, if you think it will do."

I replied that, under the circumstances, almost anything would do within limits; so he went on to tell me that a Scotch engineer who was assisting in the formation of a harbour at Kuala Klang had an abode and a wife in the neighbourhood. He was sure they would be delighted to house me until I could start for Malacca. He declined to listen to my doubts on this subject, and when we reached the Kuala, insisted upon fetching the engineer and his wife and making us all have dinner with him. After the meal we adjourned to a remote corner of the jungle, where we found the engineer's house. He was the possessor of a piano, so the frogs and the insects and the hantus were not left undisturbed to their own serenades. Piano, audience, and performer had all to be crowded inside the mosquito-house, for in that particular region daily, as well as nightly, existence was impossible except under a protecting panoply of mosquito-nets. Irish ballads and Italian *arie* had most appreciative listeners, whose disregard of the temperature inside those few square feet of netting was the most flattering compliment they could pay.

Next day I was told the engineer's tragic story. He had been employed on a vessel which traded along the coast of Achin. The Achinese—proverbially fierce and troublesome—were always searched when they came on board. But on one occasion a very fat Achinese woman arrived at the last moment, and what with the hurry of departure and the fact of her being a woman no one examined her. It was never suspected that her plumpness was due to the “krisen” (daggers) which were hung round her under her clothes. It did not take her long to supply the passengers with weapons; and when the captain and engineer were quietly seated at tiffin, the Achinese rushed in and stabbed them, and then murdered the rest of the crew wholesale. The captain crawled to the bridge and fell dead there; and the

engineer crawled to the engine-room, and after the Achinese had made off with their booty he recovered sufficiently to bring the steamer to port. Since then it has been made the rule to cage in the Achinese passengers the moment they come on board. The hero of the tragedy was beamed on by his bright-faced Scotch wife as he related the story, and congratulated himself upon his more peaceful occupation at the harbour, which is now completed—Port Swettenham having become the new title for Kuala Klang.

The steamer on which I recommenced my round-about route to Port Dickson was known as the overland vessel. One morning the passengers had awakened to find the boat stationary, her nose run up on to land, with her prow heading straight for a lighthouse in the most confiding way. For once in its existence the building had been regarded as a seduction instead of a warning, and felt duly complimented no doubt. But it was a little trying to travel on a vessel so addicted to flattery, and I felt quite ready to leave her when I was summoned at five o'clock next day and told that a Chinaman was waiting to take me on board the Chinese boat. My temporary conductor looked as if he owned a part share in the vessel, for he stood in the prow of a rocking sampan enveloped in a dignity which the buffeting of the waters had no power to destroy. It was a beautiful morning, which was only what was expected of it in those parts. The glow which preceded the sunrise gave Malacca a rosy complexion, and the outline of the old cathedral was sharply defined in the early light. This was the resting-place of the bones of St Francis Xavier before they were taken to Goa; and if Malacca was really the Ophir of Bible mention, it cherished much older memories of the ships of King Solomon, which carried away their picturesque cargoes of spices, ivory, peacocks, and apes.

The dignified Celestial handed me on board the Chinese steamer with much pomposity. I embarked with difficulty over lower decks covered with pigs in their pokes, and upper decks littered from stem to stern with prostrate Chinese who, fortunately, seemed to have no objection to being trodden upon. I trusted I should not be expected to take the same recumbent position, and was relieved when the Scotch captain invited me on to the bridge, and squeezed me into the only available corner under the wheel. His social success as an entertainer weighed him down more than the cares of navigation, and he soon unfolded most of his history, and combined with it varied experiences of the Chinese for whom and among whom he worked. He had been obliged to engage a new compradore for the vessel, as the former one had been discovered in the hold energetically hammering a nail into his head, which was found to be already decorated with two other rusty ones. They were extracted by a pair of pincers, one nail being two-and-a-quarter inches long. The captain sent him to the civil hospital for an operation, but he nearly died under chloroform, so his cure had to be left to nature, and he was now walking about again nearly well and anxious to regain his position as compradore.

The captain's conversation was presently interrupted by some Malay ladies who spied me out and came to me, stepping over the prostrate Chinese with the vigorous arm-swinging walk of the feminine Malay. Their eloquence almost outvied the captain's; and when topics of interest failed, owing to the paucity of my comprehension, we resorted to fingering each others' ornaments, and exclaiming "Bagus, bagus" (pretty, pretty), like a mutual admiration society.

Breakfast, tiffin, and tea were rolled into one at twelve o'clock, when I sat down to a repast with the captain and the mates. The poor captain had great

difficulty to find time to swallow, so much his duty did he consider it never to interrupt his own flow of words. My presence caused the first mate to be covered with confusion and blushes. In his embarrassment he alternately fed himself and the ship's cat off his fork, and then dug it into the contents of the dishes from which I was supposed to be helped.

I slumbered most of the afternoon, waking at intervals to answer the captain at random, and going to sleep again to dream that the Chinese passengers were rising to murder us. There was no earthly reason why they should not have done so had they so desired, except that the Chinese are a law-abiding people and do not rise in that promiscuous way. I had a comfortable conviction that they would not, and so was able to enjoy a little superficial thrill of fear that they might. If one could always make certain beforehand of not being hurt in any way, danger would certainly be the most delightful experience in the world. At last the captain woke me by demanding my passage-money. I happened to have made sure of the amount before starting, so knew that he was mentioning an entirely fancy price. I did not think I needed to pay extra for the exercise his tongue had indulged in, so I told him agreeably that I could not think of troubling the commander of the steamer with petty finances, and should be obliged if he would send me the comprador. The captain looked as if he regretted his lofty position, and reluctantly called for the Celestial, who asked for the modest sum which was strictly legitimate, and made Chinese integrity on that occasion compare rather favourably with Scotch.

The vessel took nearly an hour coquetting with the wharf at Port Dickson before she could be induced to lie up alongside. The captain told me I was lucky; she usually took an hour and a half.

The Freshcombes were much amazed at my belated

arrival, and could not understand how I had reached them *via* Malacca, so, as explanations were tedious, I left them to think out my route at their leisure, while I went off to make the most I could of the sea. There was no need to shiver on the brink before entering it, or be nervous of a cold shock. The bath had been carefully heated, the waves all warmed deliciously, the sea, like the atmosphere, tended to luxury; even the tide seemed to be filled with a lazy languor as it came creeping up over the beach. The Malays are like most other people in having an explanation for everything, whether they understand anything about it or not. Consequently some Malays attribute tides to the influence of the sun, or to currents of the sea; while others still believe that they are caused by a gigantic crab which lives in a cavern in the depths of the great ocean, where grows "pauh janggi," an immense submarine tree. The movements of the crab as he goes to and from his abode at meal times are supposed to account for a displacement of the water, and the consequent rise and fall discernible on the land. But the Malays must sometimes wonder why a crab of such virtuously regular habits should always insist upon varying his dinner-hour from day to day. To the Malay idea the ocean, like the land, is crowded with spirits. Si Raya, the Great One, corresponds at sea to Batara Guru on shore. Both are impersonations of the Hindu god Shiva, supreme deity of the borrowed Hindu pantheon. Like many a westerner the Malay does not realise the contradictions of his belief, and with his face turned to Mecca piously recites in all sincerity—"la—ilaha—illa—'llah," there is no God but God.

The Freshcombes had to leave Port Dickson early next day. Mrs Freshcombe was still suffering from her wounded ankle and from a nervous dread of encountering snakes and knives. Mr Freshcombe had

a crestfallen, guilty appearance as he assisted his wife's halting footsteps. He seemed afraid I should mention first-aid cures or ambulance lectures, and with evident relief committed my morning into the keeping of a new cadet, as my train for Seremban was not due to start till the afternoon.

The cadet was very new and most interested in the country of his adoption, so we determined there and then to explore as much of it as we could. We walked along a road overlooking the sea to a schoolhouse, where small Malay boys were standing back to back doing their "kira kira" (arithmetic) out loud with great volubility. A little farther on we came to a Malay village, where the Penghulu (head-man) received us with much cordiality, and refreshed us with cocoa-nut milk. There seemed a good deal of stir among the community under the palm-trees, and much beating of drums and banging of gongs announced that some special function was taking place. The Penghulu explained that they were celebrating his daughter's wedding, and he escorted us to his house, showing no signs of the nervousness which many British papas exhibit on such auspicious days. Under a decorated erection we found the musicians thumping and banging with increased vigour as the Penghulu came into sight. Far off in the distance other gongs and drums made themselves audible as the musical escort of the bridegroom and his retinue. A Malay wedding takes several days to accomplish, and the bridegroom is carried about in state for some time before being brought to the house of the bride. A dozen silent, motionless men were sitting in a row waiting for him in gloomy solemnity, more like mutes at a funeral than the first of the wedding-guests. We passed behind them and went up a little stair, and entered the house, which was decorated with curtains and hangings.

At the farther end of the room the bride squatted in front of a raised dais on which white and red pillows were piled. They looked excessively hard and uncomfortable, but they had handsome ornamented ends and played an important part in the proceedings, as the number of white pillows notified the social position of the bride. The girl, surrounded by several older women, sat like a graven image in front of the manifestations of her importance, her head bent down and her hands folded in her lap. She wore a silk sarong and a tight-fitting jacket, and a head-dress of artificial flowers fastened loosely in her hair. She had on bracelets and anklets and rings on her fingers, the tips of which were coloured with henna, this staining being part of the marriage ceremony. One of the women suddenly grasped her chin and tilted back her face to let us look at it, but the girl continued true to her native decorum; her eyelids remained lowered and her head sank forward the moment her chin was released. The rôle of a Malay bride appeared tiring and stupid, but as people have such varied ideas of amusement the lady in question was possibly thoroughly enjoying herself. She seemed a self-possessed young person, in spite of the official excess of modesty, and looked quite sixteen or seventeen, though, according to the Penghulu, she was only eleven years old. In front of her was placed a kind of three-tiered box filled with saffron-coloured rice and surmounted by an erection of artificial flowers, coloured eggs, and red paper streamers. The Penghulu presented us with boughs which appeared to grow flowers, eggs, and paper indiscriminately. The new cadet grew quite nervous for fear the eggs were meant to be eaten, and smelt them by mistake for the flowers, and repeated "bagus, bagus" enthusiastically, in the hope that would show sufficient appreciation.

All the real fun would begin with the arrival of the bridegroom, who is met with volleys of rice from the lady attendants, and has playfully to force his way into the house. He repeats a sentence after the imam (priest) to say that he takes the woman as his wife, whereupon the guests hail him with shouts of "Peace be with thee"; it is to be hoped including the lady in the wish. He then squats, cross-legged, on the left of the bride, and the two feed each other with rice simultaneously, after which the guests are allowed to begin to eat. Dancing and singing are kept up most of the night, through the whole prolonged period, which includes many and varied ceremonies which the Penghulu took a great deal of trouble to explain. We were rather glad we were not there on the last day, when the ceremony of the bath forms the finale of the jollifications, the bride and bridegroom being doused with lucky water, while the guests get very wet and excited, and go home at last to indulge in the *dolce far niente* allowable after such protracted festivities.

It would have taken several days to witness the whole of the wedding, and as it was I suddenly realised that I was too late to reach the station in time for my train. However, if one has a few lucky stars in one's horoscope, one can generally in dilemmas rely upon somebody or something coming to one's help. In this case the Penghulu was ready with a suggestion. He knew of a siding in the jungle where the train would stop in an accommodating way if waved to by a passer-by. So we left the village for the jungle, and discovered the railway track, and as I still thought the prospects seemed remote of my continuing my journey, the new cadet produced an enormous red handkerchief which he knew would make the engine-driver so apprehensive of his own safety that he would be certain to stop. The signal accom-

plished its purpose, and I stepped into the train from a platform of sensitive plants, whose spikey leaves and creamy-pink flowers shrivelled dejectedly as my footsteps passed over them, and then raised themselves to peer inquisitively at the new cadet, who continued to flaunt his red handkerchief as he retreated down the line.

My only companion in the railway compartment looked like a planter. He did not take the slightest notice of me, but sat studying his paper with downcast eyes like the Malay bride. I pondered upon the ways of Englishmen. A man of any other nationality would surely have shown some interest when a train stopped at a jungle siding to let a strange young woman get in. But this Englishman ignored my presence in the wilderness as if I had just entered the underground railway in London, and given him no more cause for surprise. I could not help deciding that the ways of Englishmen were a little inclined to be dull. The seat was not very comfortable. I sat forward and then leant back. In an instant the unconcerned stranger darted to the other end of the carriage and returned with a cushion which he thrust behind my back. "Thank you," I said politely as he returned to his seat. Through the whole proceeding his eyelids were not raised for one second, nor did his eyes ever wander from the paper which he held. Presently I moved again. Once more, in a twinkling, a second cushion was stuffed behind me. Once more I said "thank you" to the downcast eyes. They were never raised once the whole journey, yet no matter how infinitesimal a movement I made, a cushion was immediately produced. At last I was supported by so many that there was hardly any room left for me on the seat. I sat on the extreme edge, not daring to stir a finger for fear a final cushion should push me

off on to the floor. I felt it impossible to explain no more were required, as it seemed entirely out of place to address a pair of lowered lids. Presently we stopped at a station and my *vis-à-vis* departed, leaving me quite undecided whether I should have bowed him good-bye or not. Up to the last moment he never appeared to look at me, yet I had an unpleasant conviction that he was thoroughly conscious that I failed to bow when he left.

The train continued its route through the jungle. I re-arranged the cushions and resumed my reflections upon the ways of Englishmen. But this time I came to the conclusion that they were most strange and interesting.

CHAPTER IX.

NEGRI SEMBILAN.

THE State now known as Negri Sembilan (the Nine Countries) is really composed of a confederation of Malay States, each possessing a separate native ruler, but all administered by one British Resident and one Council, over which the Yam Tuan, the hereditary head of Sri Menanti, has been appointed President. Seremban, the official capital, is a replica of Taiping and Kuala Lumpor, with slight divergencies of climate and scenery. There are hills and valleys, jungle and rice-fields, and altogether nature shows herself in as wild a fit of extravagance as she does everywhere else in that tropical land. White civilisation has played its part too, and made a fine race-course, with a straight of three furlongs, and built all the usual Government offices, most of which are situated on their own particular hills. There is a church, but at the time of my visit no clergyman. A civilian officiated, and the local ladies gave their services as choir, to which a company of dogs in the doorway added unsolicited help.

The Resident's wife had gone to England, and the temporary mistress of the Residency was a small daughter whose five years of existence had made her quite competent for the *rôle*. In fact, as her pet occupation was to parade in front of the guard at the

entrance, and rigorously enforce their remaining at the salute, the Sikhs at last petitioned that little Missie might not take such a prominent public position, as their arms were beginning to ache.

Little Missie's bed-time came before dinner, and then the Resident became host and hostess rolled into one, and far on into the night related anecdotes on the verandah, while his men friends snored approval as they lay back asleep in long chairs. Their behaviour was no aspersion on the stories, for the Resident was renowned for his art in telling them, but few men can stay awake long to the sound of any but their own voice, as can easily be proved in the Houses of Parliament. Sometimes the Dato Klana, the ruler of Sungei Ujong, the state in which Seremban is situated, used to join the gathering with another young chieftain, who wore his cap on the side of his head and marched up with a swagger that paraded the ancient and royal lineage of himself and his more important but less ostentatious relative. The younger Dato looked too haughty to appreciate the "menghadap," or ceremony which takes place once in three years, when all the chiefs, except the rulers of Sungei Ujong, Rembau, and Jelebu, do obeisance to the Yam Tuan, who, though of the royal blood of Menankabau, is not one of the sons of the Native States' soil in the same august line of which the Dato Klana and his proud young relation can boast. But a little chastening of spirit was good for the latter, no doubt.

Kuala Pilah was the show place of the neighbourhood, but, owing to official duties, the Resident was obliged to take me instead to Jelebu, which, however, was sufficiently beautiful to incite admiration in the mind of a Goth. We started from Seremban early in the morning, when the air blew chilly in our faces, and the sky glowed like molten gold. Seven miles of the

way lay along a beautiful jungle-pass where tree-ferns poked their heads at us, having, like an elongated Alice in Wonderland, quite lost sight of their roots, which were hidden in gorges twenty and thirty feet below. Stag-ferns and orchids grew high above on the trees, where they had to be planted, according to the Malays, because of no available room on the ground. Monkeys made faces at us, parroquets screeched, and strange forest perfumes insisted that our noses should be kept well employed. From the Government bungalow at the top of the pass there were fine views over distant blue hills, and greetings from little pink roses that condescended to grow at that higher altitude, and made us feel suddenly home-sick for English hedges in June.

When we left the jungle we reached fertile, cultivated country. The "padi" fields stretched on either side of us in bright emerald green luxuriance, with the turquoise blue sky above them and the sapphire-tinted mountains behind, while borders of cocoa-nut trees completed the picture of general affluence. The Resident expatiated upon the rice with a pride that was fondly paternal, since by its means he had increased the revenue fourfold and added to his own repute. Never were there such orderly "padi" fields, not a rice-stalk out of position, not a weed that dared to intrude. Very different was this tidy prosperity to the water-logged, buffalo-trodden fields which acknowledged no ambitious guardianship.

Jelebu proved a delightful conglomeration of hills, valleys, jungle, "padi," palms, Malay houses, and English bungalows, where the compounds were flaming with hibiscus and gaudy-leaved crotons. In the garden, where we passed most of the afternoon, an aloe was in bloom. After about ten years of life it produces a beautiful blossom and then dies immediately, apparently

from a shock of surprise. We had tea on a mound under a great banyan-tree, from which little shreds of cloth were hanging, and under which small flags and joss-sticks were stuck into the ground. On asking for an explanation of these adornments I felt like a misguided Israelite when I was told that we were seated on a "kramat," nothing more nor less than one of the "high places" referred to in Holy Writ. They are often the burial-sites of people whose graves are considered sacred; or sometimes they possess a tree or a rock which is made the object of worship; or are simply revered as the abode of the "jin" (spirit) of the eminence. Afternoon tea on a "kramat" seemed positively flippant, particularly as the one in question was very specially favoured with two ancient graves of Malayan rajas, and the great banyan possessed of a "hantu," or ghost. There are many such trees in the Peninsula, and the Malays believe dire misfortune will at once befall anybody who ventures to cut one down. No native would dare to go near that banyan after dark, and I burnt my mouth horribly, swallowing my tea in a hurry, so that the Chinese boy might clear away the cups and saucers in time. The Celestials in the Peninsula learn to attach the same importance to the haunted trees and the high places, and register their vows at these shrines. They make awkward mistakes occasionally, as in the well-known story of the tactless Chinese who offered some pork at a Moslem sanctuary, and was consequently torn to pieces by the ghost-tiger which guarded it. Most "kramats" are supposed to be protected by ghost-tigers or elephants, white in appearance and inoffensive in behaviour, unless egregiously insulted as they were in this case. One began to feel creepy hidden under the shadows of the great banyan, while the western sky turned gory and then faded to lemon-yellow, and the dusk stole over the rice-fields and the

palm-trees below, so, instead of making the most of such an excellent introduction to phantoms, not one of us raised an objection when the Resident moved a prosaic adjournment to the club.

Joseph joined us at Seremban, and took me back overland to Kuala Lumpur—a journey which can now be accomplished by rail, but at that time we had to drive a great part of the way. Here and there we passed villages where tailless cats swelled the number of the inhabitants, and the women came out and inquired, “Tuan punya?”—the Master’s property?—pointing at me. I, as a sister, scorned such phraseology; but it was rather derogatory to a wife’s individuality, illustrating the fact that, according to Malay theory, the woman was no more than the chattel of the man. However, it was apparent that, on theory being put into practice, many of the burly dames who inspected us had long since gained the upper hand, for character dominates all the world over, irrespective of fashion or sex.

It was late when we drove through the jungle. Darkness hid the night-birds and the insects that made themselves audible, and only a few fire-flies darted about like link-boys with torches in a fog. The tigers and elephants left themselves to the imagination—a convenient custom of theirs, unless they happen to be man-eaters or rogues, when they force themselves upon people with a forwardness only explicable when one remembers that a rogue is an elephant whose manners are so uncouth as to cause him to be cut by the whole of his family. In revenge he retaliates upon society, and his final condition becomes seven times worse than his first. As for a man-eating tiger—the terror of a village—the Malays know him to be the four-legged personification of a man thirsting for blood. The people of Korinchi, in Sumatra, are supposed to

possess the power of turning into tigers at will. There are believed to be tiger folk and elephant folk, who live in towns of their own, and behave like ordinary mortals, except when periodical attacks of frenzy drive them out into the jungle in their animal shape.

"Oh! I see," I said, as Joseph entered into these explanations; "next time I get a fit of nerves I shall know it is the tiger-spirit entering me."

"You mean the next time your behaviour gets fish-wifey," said Joseph, making a most uncalled-for observation, as I generally treated him to monotonous amiability. However, it does not do to be perpetually sugary even with brothers. Most men prefer a savoury to a sweet.

Bushranger lost a shoe before we ended our journey, but chose the convenient moment when we reached the town of Semungei, where Chinese shops lined the highway and Mongol civilisation paraded its energy. Joseph sent the syce to get the horse shod while he and I exercised our patience at the rest-house for a considerable time. At last it transpired that the syce had quietly gone to his "makan" (dinner), and that Bushranger continued destitute of a shoe. Joseph expressed his opinion in very forcible language, and went off in search of a farrier; while the cringing Singhalese rest-house keeper placed himself at my service in a shivery, shakey fashion, as if he expected to be ill-used. He was most anxious to show me the sights of Semungei, as there is nothing a Singhalese enjoys more than imparting information, especially as he never worries himself about being accurate.

"Ladee coming seeing gambling farm?" he suggested.

This was just what I did want to see, so I made the most of the opportunity.

There was a good deal of tom-tom beating and noise going on in the town. We passed an excited group of

people clustered round a man who was dancing with a tiger-skin thrown over his shoulders, and seemed really possessed of the tiger-spirit which Joseph had talked about. The swarthy onlookers were Klings, and the rest-house keeper explained that this was the chief evening of the Tivalli—a Tamil festival which had gained these coolies a much appreciated holiday. Beyond a spirit house, with a joss altar in the window, we came to the gambling farm—that is to say, the premises where the right to conduct gambling was allowed to a Chinese individual or syndicate on payment of regular fees. The Government—too tender-hearted to let Chinese criminals be flogged for brutal offences—has not hesitated to make use of gambling and opium to swell the monetary returns. However, it seems probable that these aids to revenue may be discontinued in the not far distant future, and methods be adopted for dealing with the opium question on the wise and moderate lines employed in Formosa by the Japanese. The rest-house keeper ushered me into the building, where we found the croupier squatting on top of a table, dealing out brass counters and dice. He was surrounded by a group of Chinese so intent on their occupation that they were oblivious of everything else. The game appeared to be a kind of *rouge et noir*. The gambler bet on red or black, and possessed himself of a little card of the selected shade. He put out a certain number of dice, and won or lost according to the colour of the cards dealt out. The Singhalese explained every detail with so much elaboration that I failed to comprehend a word he said. The air of indifference that cloaks a Chinese did not lend itself to a tragic aspect of gambling. Still, the concentration of the players showed how momentous they must have considered the stakes. It was depressing to see such a strong-minded people a prey to their national weak-

ness, so I hurried my mincing escort out again into the moist, steamy night.

"What ladee wanting seeing now?" he inquired.

"Ladee" had not much choice in the matter. The news of the presence of the white foreign devils had been noised abroad in Semungei. In a few moments the street was packed by gaping Celestials, to whom a white woman's appearance was evidently the hugest joke in the world. Even the enterprising Singhalee considered more excursions impossible, though he clapped his hands and waved them at the crowd, and cried "Sh! sh!" as if he were trying to disperse a cluster of chickens. But the inhabitants of Semungei treated his futile efforts with the contempt they deserved. A considerate shopkeeper decided that if I was to be the show of the evening I might as well enjoy the distinction in comfort. He fetched a wooden arm-chair, placed it in the middle of the street, and then seated me in it. The crowd gathered closer and made personal remarks. It seemed an opportunity to acquire the "giftie" "tae see ourselves as ithers see us" advocated by Robert Burns. However, perhaps it was as well that ignorance of Chinese obliged me to do without. The hospitable shopkeeper next presented me with a brimming tankard of beer, an abhorrence in that climate; but as the crowd was delighted and began to laugh in a chorus, it was impossible to refuse it without seeming impolite. I partook of the refreshment cautiously, but at each sip the onlookers' amusement grew more and more uncontrolled. Their faces looked so grotesque in the flickering lantern light that I began to join in the laughter, which led to some of the beer being upset by a merciful accident, and general "high-strikes" on the part of Semungei's inhabitants appeared the inevitable result. They were spared this humiliation by the sight of a dejected trio, sobering

in effect. Between the mass of surging figures, topped by hilarious yellow faces, came Joseph with a heated countenance, leading Bushranger, who wore an air of protest, followed by a sulky, crestfallen syce whose "makan" had evidently been brought to a sudden end. Bushranger's plunges scattered the crowd effectually. "Tabek, tabek!" all cried, as we made a precipitate start that disconcerted the salutations. We reached Kajang that night, and from there the train took us back next day to Kuala Lumpor, where a new duty awaited us.

CHAPTER X.

KUALA LUMPUR, DUSUN TUA.

THE new duty came to us in the shape of an itinerant Member of Parliament, who thought the Malay States a tasty tit-bit to help to appease his greed for travel.

"Nowhere are you safe from globe-trotters nowadays," Joseph grumbled. He used the word with the contempt of the Imperial toiler whose surroundings, circumstances, and actions are apt to be so misunderstood and misinterpreted by these superficial critics. Besides, he knows his guest's probable comment on his journeying will be a condescending "Well, really, I only left England so as to appreciate it better now I'm back"; and the Imperial toiler wonders whether his altruism is sufficiently developed to give of his best only that a lesson of contentment may thereby be learned.

But our itinerant M.P. was no ordinary globe-trotter. He had penetrated far and wide into such recesses of the planet that we felt proud that the Malay States remained among the few places he had not yet seen. He had been known to boast openly at tea on the terrace that some of his happiest hours had been spent in such far-away haunts. Consequently the Resident was determined to do his duty by him, and Joseph and I were called in to play our part. Joseph personally conducted a tour through the nearest tin-mines,

after which the M.P. was intrusted to my keeping for a morning, which I decided should be spent in an inspection of the Batu caves.

Nipis went with us. We started after breakfast, and drove along the flat Batu road, past Malay houses, past fruit-trees and coffee estates nine miles out to the foot of a grim-looking hill. Nipis was in such high spirits that I had to curtail conversation with our visitor and inquire into their cause. He explained that he was exulting over the astute way in which he had saved himself trouble. For weeks past some half-castes had been trying to bring a case on in court. He knew the long-winded people he would have to deal with, and had put off the hearing of the case until postponement was no longer possible. The inevitable day dawned, and the disputants arrived in court about ten o'clock. Nipis suggested that they should come to an agreement without his assistance. They replied that would be impossible. He then regretted that he could not hear the case till three in the afternoon. He knew the value of those hours of tedium, and, as he expected, plaintiffs and defendants whiled away the boredom of the interval by mutual apologies. Long before three o'clock the case was amicably ended, and Nipis produced the local paper to show us how each party had sent a letter to it the first thing next morning to explain that they had only apologised because the others had done so first.

The M.P. looked thoughtful. He had taken out his note-book at the beginning of these disclosures and his pencil had been kept busy. "Facts to be brought up in the House next session," I read over his shoulder. I trembled for Nipis. I foresaw the leading articles which would wax pathetic over the perversion of British justice in a Moslem land. I feared he might be served up as a warning unless I intervened.

"There's so much matter for you to wade through," I said. "So much you'll see and hear in the Malay Peninsula. Don't you think you'd better let us sift it for you,—just give you the important bits?"

Nipis gave valuable assistance. The case of the half-castes paled before startling revelations. Between our united efforts no other itinerant M.P. ever learnt so much about any country in such a short space of time. But when Nipis understood the object of the exertions he did not altogether appreciate them. He seemed to have a hankering to become a warning, and—such is masculine ingratitude—rather considered that I had blighted his opportunity.

The grim-looking hill had to be ascended. A rough-and-ready path wound up it through tangled undergrowth. We scrambled along, and the syces clattered behind with the luncheon-basket, for we were to have a picnic tiffin in the cave. Some way up the side of the cliff we came to the entrance, and passed through into what looked like one of nature's cathedrals. Orifices in the great dome above our heads resembled church windows. The dripping of limestone water had formed columns and pillars of stalactite, and streamers of calcareous matter were suspended like chandeliers from the roof. On one side a rock projected like a pulpit, and as we had no cleric in our company to preach us a sermon the M.P. suggested that he should make us a speech. He mounted the eminence and gave us the benefit of the rhetoric of St Stephen's, thereby considerably startling some bats. Nipis, like many plump people, was possessed of a beautiful voice. He was so inspired by the M.P.'s example that the moment the latter descended from the parliamentary platform Nipis converted it into a concert stage. Perched above us he was not viewed from the most becoming angle, but his voice awoke organ-like echoes, and beyond,

down the curved sides of a roofless cave, where masses of creepers tumbled, little trickles of water ceaselessly gurgled an accompaniment. The "Songs of Araby and Tales of Far Cashmere" could never have been sung to a setting of greater romance—

"And all my soul shall strive to wake
Sweet wonder in thine eyes."

Unfortunately there was a slight landslip at the moment, which nearly precipitated the singer over the edge of the pulpit and gave my eyes cause to wonder at a cloud of dust that suddenly filled them. The luncheon-basket was upset, and the men made lamentation that they had not sooner occupied their mouths with more mundane things.

It was deliciously cool in the cave. The sunshine seemed in an unnecessary frenzy when we emerged from the shadows. But the M.P.'s education had to be completed, so we tore ourselves away.

Next day we gave him a curry tiffin. He protested that would be no novel experience. We told him to wait to make sure. I believe he found that it was. It was doubtful whether he had ever before used a smooth plantain-leaf as a plate, or piled his rice high into a cone, with a surrounding circle of fifty different sorts of curries, which in their turn were surrounded by an outer circle of all manner of tasty condiments.

"What's the pine-apple for?" he inquired as we gave him a piece.

We told him he would know soon.

"Not at all hot! Not at all hot! The mistake we make in England is to have curry too hot," he commented, tasting one of the kinds.

He grew bolder and tasted another kind, shovelling most of one of the little heaps of "sambals" into his spoon. With tears streaming down his cheeks he

now knew the use of the pine-apple, and when he continued his tiffin he treated the different curries with considerably increased respect.

"Now I'll have what you call a 'stinker,'" he announced, and was surprised when we laughed very much as we helped him to a "whisky stengah" (a split), and complimented him upon his rapid acquirement of Malay.

Not long after the M.P. had departed on fresh itinerations, life was varied for me by attacks of intermittent fever, which came on about two o'clock every afternoon, the hour when the Spectre Huntsman afflicts his victims—so at least say the Malays. Ah Song was also ill. He quite lost his spruce gentlemanly appearance, and went about with his temples covered with little round plasters, which he advised me to try, to drive away the bad joss. His dilapidated looks were not a tempting advertisement, so my recovery was left to nature, as Joseph was away and Chinese methods of nursing consist simply in leaving the patient alone. However, fever, like everything else, can become a matter of habit, and in malarious countries one grows accustomed to performing one's usual avocations with a temperature that in England would mean bed and the doctor, despairing friends, and discussed possibilities of an early decease.

When Joseph came back he advised the best remedy—change of air. We settled to pay a visit to the sulphur-springs at Dusun Tua, and invited Nipis and the Belle to join us there. The latter was the lady who held the flattering but onerous position of the officially acknowledged beauty of the Federated Malay States.

We assembled at the pretty bungalow at Dusun Tua, where pale-blue convolvuli tumbled over the porch. A nicely kept lawn in front of it might have been im-

ported from England, but beyond there were palms and plantains and giant jungle-trees to assure us of tropical wilds. On one side of the bungalow a little river babbled with noisy importance. On the other side a cloud of steam rose up from the sulphur-spring. We began our daily round with a hot sulphur-bath, followed by a cold dip in the fussy stream, which we decided to navigate so as to judge of its boastful pretensions on our own account.

It was scarcely an expedition to be recommended to invalids, and the Belle and I were a little doubtful about it for other reasons, but Joseph swept our objections to one side. He secured a bamboo-raft, on which a pair of inverted empty whisky-cases were placed in state as seats. Two tiny Malay boys were perched on the front of the raft, with poles; and though their presence did not inspire us with confidence it certainly had the effect of making us ashamed of our fears, so we scrambled up on to the raft, and in so doing ran it upon the rocks, amidst the jeers and derision of an audience of unclothed children who had come to see the start. However, Joseph and Nipis pushed us off, and the small boys poled us down-stream with great dexterity. We had to bend low, as jungle-trees clutched at each other above us, and our movements disturbed black shadows and quiet pools. Suddenly we were startled by an awe-inspiring cry from the Malay boys. They were entreating the protection of the spirit of the water, and before we had time to inquire what danger was about to befall us we were caught and whirled and twisted and shaken in the frothing, eddying, circling waves that splashed head-long over us. A moment later we knew we had shot the rapids in safety, though one dripping whisky-case disconsolately clinging to a few bamboos was all that remained of the raft. Even this foothold was suddenly

taken from us, for, turning a sharp bend in the river, we came upon an enormous tree-trunk that stretched across as a barrier from bank to bank. All we saw of the men and the boys were legs sprawling into the water, while the Belle and I somehow mounted the trunk and bestrode it till the tottery bamboos were brought back to support us again.

Soon after, we neared civilisation in the shape of Ulu Langat. Instead of jungle, rice now clothed the banks of the river, and an antiquated wheel fetched up water by means of hollow bamboos attached to all its spokes. Each bamboo poured its contents in turn into a long trough which forwarded liquid refreshment to the "padi" fields. The rice was golden now—it was almost the time of the harvest—and made a burnished foreground to the thatched house-tops of the Malay village, where we dragged ourselves ashore and were dried by the thoughtful inhabitants, who ordered a member of their community to climb the notched stair-way, cut in a cocoa-nut tree-trunk, and bring us down most acceptable fruit.

A Chinese happened to be visiting Ulu Langat that day on business, and the Malays told us that he came from a Sakai encampment, where he had taken up his residence and married a Sakai girl. We were charmed to hear of aborigines within reach in the jungle, and Joseph arranged with the Chinese that a Sakai should meet us next day and guide us to his forest retreat.

The trysting-place was on the same Langat river, but the jungle grew so thick on the banks that we had to make our way inland instead of keeping close to the water-side. Our Sakai guide never hesitated. His tawny head and bare body glimmered ahead like a beacon when the interlaced tree-tops, with their burdens of hanging parasites, shut out the sunlight and almost turned day into night. After getting our hair caught

continually, like Absalom's, in the bushes, and trying to learn the art of tight-rope walking on half-rotted tree-trunks that made the only available bridges to streams, we came to a clearing in the forest where yams and gourds were planted, and where the Sakais' pets, a tame deer and some uncouth-looking dogs, were disporting themselves. The Sakais apparently do not dislike dogs like the Malays, who accuse them of being filled with anticipations of the bones they will enjoy at their master's funeral-feast. They appear not to reflect that such predestined indulgence can only be accounted for by excess of fasting during their master's life. Beyond the clearing we came to a few rough huts the Sakais had built themselves by the river-side. A generation ago these jungle people would have fled before any stranger and hidden in the forest like the rest of the wild animals. Now they came out to receive us with quite society manners, perhaps recognising the cause they had for friendliness with the white men, before whose coming they had been ruthlessly killed by the Malays or caught and sold into slavery.

Two Chinese lived in this encampment, working hard as usual, and doing a good business as intermediaries in the Sakais' commercial relations with the outer world. The commerce cannot have been complicated, for the Sakais' needs, though ever increasing, still continue conveniently few. The fashions of the jungle are not worrying, for man or woman can be sure of the mode in an abridged costume of bark-cloth. One individual evidently wished to cut a dash and outvie his simpler relations, for he was gorgeous in a yellow "sarong" that somehow only seemed to make him look more of a wild beast. His features did not seem in keeping with complications of raiment; and with his small eyes, heavy jowl, and sharply pointed ears, he only looked suited to pose as the "Hyena Swine" in Mr Wells' 'Island of Dr

Moreau.' The Belle and I were duly thankful that there was no necessity for a *tête-à-tête* with him.

Housekeeping cannot worry the Sakai ladies much more than the fashions. The little plantation provided for most of their needs, and a cleverly constructed bamboo-trap on the river kept them supplied with fresh fish. The men, who looked strong and sturdy, were all armed with blow-pipes—long hollow weapons through which they shoot poisoned darts. We wanted to admire their marksmanship, so Nipis hung his topi on a tree and told them to use it as a target. He said it would be so convenient to have it to show in the future, in corroboration of some story of hair-breadth escapes.

After consultation a patriarch stepped forward. He placed his pipe between his thick lips and blew down it. An arrow whizzed through the air and struck with a little thud right into the crown of the topi. We applauded, but after all it was only what we had expected, so we did not manifest our approval in any very exuberant way. The Sakais, however, seemed awe-struck. They whispered remarks to each other, pointed excitedly at the patriarch and gazed at the solar topi as if it were bewitched. Candidate after candidate now stepped forward and levelled his blow-pipe in the direction of the target, but the hat escaped scatheless except for its original wound. It was all too evident that these were degenerate Sakais, who had learnt to secure their dinners by such much easier methods that they had forgotten how to make use of blow-pipes,—all except the patriarch, and he was wary; no eloquence could persuade him to have a second try. They seemed to understand that they had disappointed our expectations, and looked crestfallen and rather ashamed of themselves. As a matter of fact, the discontinuance of poisoned darts fitting through the wilderness seemed strongly to be recommended; and in regard to personal appearance no

practice could be more detrimental, for the coarse pouting lips of these people are said to be partly accounted for by the way in which they have to protrude them to take hold of the blow-pipes.

The Belle and I decided that, though the Sakais could not improve their broad, flattened features, there was really not the slightest excuse for their going about in such a tousled-haired, shock-headed state. Yet to some this was rather becoming, and we relinquished the idea of sending them brushes and combs. One Sakai girl was really pretty. She made us understand the stories of Malays who have ventured much to gain a forest bride. But such Malays are few and far between, and so are good-looking Sakais.

The evening was the most beautiful time at Dusun Tua. That afternoon, when we returned from the Sakai encampment, we went down to the river and feasted on durians. The bank of the rushing stream was an ideal place to partake of this marvellous fruit, and as the others devoured it I had to follow their example in self-defence against the smell. The process of learning to like it was trying, and the result of succeeding even more so, for by then I had to leave the Peninsula filled with an acquired longing for the unattainable. A course of mangosteens came after the other fruit, and then, as we balanced ourselves on rickety stones by the river, a silence fell over us, not due to the durians, though, judging by Joseph's consumption of them, that might have seemed a probable cause. No; we were quiet because the glory of the dying day had something awe-inspiring about it. Behind the purple hills the sky in the east was aflame from the parting rays of the sun, which had dipped behind the western jungle. Suspended like a lamp from the burnished sky a crescent moon poured silvery radiance over the splashing river, which gleamed and sparkled like diamonds. Presently

a mountain-top looked ablaze and a great star burst into view and vied with the moon in illuming our poor little planet. Strange lights flickered on the hills. Around us the forest stirred itself; there was rustling among the bushes; a black panther, or some other wild creature, had come to improve his constitution by a dose of sulphur-water. But the spell was broken. The night was with us. The realisation of things as they are dispels the awesome anticipation of things as they may be. The Belle and I fetched our guitars and sang out-of-doors in the moonlight, while the men fanned away the mosquitoes and sand-flies—the drawbacks to all Malay Edens. Yet, however, in spite of them we felt in no hurry to leave Dusun Tua. Fate decreed otherwise. Next morning a scared-looking Malay found his way to the bungalow and, presenting himself before us, poured out the same old story that is repeated in all parts of the globe where men go as pioneers and build empires upon personal suffering and sacrifice. He explained that another victim had fallen alone and unattended at some small jungle out-station. The body had been left untouched while the Malay had been despatched to give information to the nearest white “Tuan.”

Joseph decided that, while the rest of us returned to Kuala Lumpur, he would set out by himself and rescue what remained of the poor shattered frame left to such shocking exposure. And so he performed his gruesome labour of love and brought the body to its last home in a Christian graveyard. He collected the dead man's things and sent them, with a tender little letter, such as men sometimes know how to write, to a country parish in England where, perhaps, the sun of some woman's existence set to rise no more in this life, while far away from her an unpretentious grave marked another foundation-stone of the Empire.

CHAPTER XI.

KUALA LUMPUR, AND JOURNEY TO SEMANGKO PASS.

"CHRISTMAS comes but once a year," but the years seem collapsible; at any rate Christmas gets in more and more of a hurry to come round. On this occasion it brought unexpected tidings to Joseph, who was to be transferred to Kuala Lipis in Pahang. He had just learnt something about his present billet—in fact, was becoming efficient—so it was evidently considered time to let him experiment elsewhere and give some ignoramus the chance of acquiring his hardly-gained knowledge. Indeed, my brother was already receiving frantic appeals from his successor for books which would tell him something about his new work. As Joseph had not been to Pahang, and the novelty appealed to him, he acquiesced without offering any argument, and consequently I began to make my own plans. Kuala Lipis lies in the depths of the forest. No house there was yet ready for Joseph, and his new duties would be constantly taking him into the jungle, so he agreed that, after paying Pahang a visit, I might just as well go back to Europe, as, under the changed circumstances, my company would not often be able to benefit him. Although not Hebraic, it almost stands to reason that having one brother called Joseph I should have another called Benjamin. The latter is in the army, and at that

time was stationed in India, where he and his wife, Anemone, invited me to stop with them on my way. So I wrote and forewarned them of the date of my coming, and then, these duties over, Joseph and I gave ourselves up to the enjoyment of Christmas in Kuala Lumpor and the Resident's dinner-party, to which every one had been invited from far and near.

About fifty assembled and drew lots for partners; and as the women were few and the men many, it was decided that the latter should progress between the courses, to give each of them a chance. The table was covered with Chinese toys of every variety—toys that grunted, toys that whistled, toys that squeaked. Pandemonium was the result.

"I've known this sort of thing happen sometimes with dessert," groaned an elderly judge from Singapore, "but never before with the soup."

A sufficient shock was in store for him, to make the dessert original, for the Resident's favourite horses then pranced into the room, considerably agitating those of us whose personal adornments they mistook for the dainties they considered their due. When they had finished their Christmas dinner, and every one's nervous tension was a little relieved, there was a general outcry for a speech. The ladies were not to be let off, said the Resident, and called upon Mrs Freshcombe as the newest bride.

She looked at me imploringly.

"Propose a toast: that's no trouble," I suggested.

Mrs Freshcombe stood up—hesitated. "Sweethearts and — husbands," she announced spasmodically, and sat down.

Her audience looked surprised. Mrs Retale was unutterably shocked, and sent round for an explanation.

"Of course I mean one at a time—the sweetheart

first and the husband afterwards. Not both together," said Mrs Freshcombe, growing annoyed.

Some of the married men looked a little self-conscious, but before Mrs Retale could inquire into the express definition of the original toast the Resident rose to his feet.

"The ladies," he announced.

With tears in his eyes he proceeded to expatiate upon them. Were there no ladies there would be no society. Were there no ladies there would be no gentlemen. In short, he demonstrated the utility of the invention of woman in a manner that left no loophole for contradiction. It was the ladies, he said, who carried home and beauty and pleasure and duty (lapsing into rhyme in his enthusiasm) with them wherever they went.

We all felt aggressively worthy, even I, who had not the slightest right to the sensation. Still, I did not see why I should not lay a fictitious claim to it when such an excellent opportunity afforded itself.

Then the curtains behind the dinner-table were parted and a giant Christmas-tree came into view. It had a hang-dog, decrepit appearance, as though it knew it was only shamming; but its bare, spikey branches, feebly aping a fir-tree, were resplendent with gifts for the guests. Unfortunately, the candles burnt down in the Chinese-lanterns and set the paper on fire. A conflagration ensued. However, the guests poured chatties of water in every direction, and praised the illuminations as very well timed. Before the end of the evening Mrs Retale had fallen flat on the floor, the Belle had succeeded in jumping a sofa, and the elderly judge had turned a somersault, quite unintentionally of course. And so on we all played at being children in that innocent, boisterous fashion that makes Anglo-Eastern society sometimes appear rather like a conglomeration of overgrown school-boys and school-girls

in the eyes of the rest of the world. When we made an effort to leave a gloomy discovery awaited us. A practical joker had dismissed the syces and rickshaw-coolies, to their intense satisfaction, and nothing remained for us but to choose between walking home in the small hours or stopping on at the Residency, where the roof was being nearly lifted by cheers for the Resident. However, no one was very greatly annoyed, for it was Christmas time, and our jollity, though exhausting, left us none the less disposed to remember the message of peace and goodwill.

The days that followed were filled with employment. The house had to be dismantled and boxes packed ready to start ahead of us in the bullock-carts. Joseph gave minute instructions with great importance. Ah Song, after the manner of his countrymen, listened politely, and did everything just his own way. Ah Song had lately been indulging in a complete clearance of relations. Father, mother, brothers, grandparents, and uncles had departed this life in succession, according to the statements he made. Some had even succeeded in dying several times. These family afflictions being interpreted meant that Ah Song wanted to pay China a visit. No doubt he had a wife there, and occasionally recollected the fact. Chinese marry early, but it is not the fashion for them to take their wives with them when they travel abroad.

Ah Li, the "tukang ayer" (water-carrier), was promoted to be boy in Ah Song's stead. Ah Li belonged to the patient, placid type found among the lower orders in parts of China. His kind gentle eyes, and the love (partly cupboard) that the animals bore him, quite belied the aspersions of cruelty that are made, without distinction, against the whole Chinese race. Yet had it so happened that one had chanced to be tortured in his presence, the odds would probably have

been a hundred to one that Ah Li would have watched the proceedings without the slightest distress. It is doubtful whether they would have interested or amused him, but in all likelihood he would have resignedly considered them no affair of his, just in the same way that hardly one of us is not guilty of passing by on the other side of the cruelty and misery that are perpetually staring us in the face. The woman who can loll comfortably in her carriage behind a horse suffering obvious discomfort, if not pain, from a tightened bearing-rein, parades by her vulgar insensibility that she has not attained to even the same scale of enlightened culture as Ah Li. He, at anyrate, was always considerate to dumb creatures, even when the monkey tried everybody's patience by getting her chain so twisted round all the bushes that most of the garden shrubs had to be immolated before he could accomplish her release. She was never an exemplary monkey. Her practical jokes were beyond comment. Laden coolies dropped their breakable burdens in atoms in all directions as she jumped out from her hiding-places and snatched at their bare legs. Her favourite pleasantry was suddenly to pull the bathroom door wide open when splashing water intimated that some one was in the middle of his or her bath. Yet it was difficult to correct her. Her manners had the superficial veneer of an accomplished woman of the world. She flirted outrageously with Huntrabbit, and showed herself proficient in every wile of the born coquette. It was humiliating to trace one's own little womanly manœuvres back like this to their primitive source. Joseph refused to take her to Pahang, and Nipis undertook to drive her to her new home at Kuala Lumpor hospital. He was rather nervous about it, but his fears were unnecessary. The small creature mounted the splash-board and sat bolt

upright, like a well-disciplined groom. We heard that she died a year after from rapid consumption. Just before the end came she possessed herself of the Matron's tooth-brush, and was last seen sitting solemnly in the middle of one of the hospital wards feebly cleaning her teeth. But every one knows the vagaries of monkeys. Simian nature is much the same all over the world.

It was sad to say good-bye to the animals—four-legged and two-legged. Even the "dhobi" who had destroyed half the contents of one's wardrobe was viewed by the light of a melancholy glamour when the clothes came home for the last time—the last time in Kuala Lumpur, that is to say. It would have been positively pathetic had not their obtrusive and most unusual condition of whiteness betrayed the anticipation of a final hagggle over remote payments that unpardonable delinquencies had caused to be reduced. One wonders whether the greed of gain was exactly the same in the days when actual commodities were bartered and the troublesome symbol of worldly possessions was not even known by name. I suppose even a Tamil "dhobi" finds it hard to make two ends meet, and in fact does not always attempt it, so far as those which engird his own person are concerned.

The Chinese decided to give a special theatrical performance to express their regret at Joseph's departure. We made up quite a big theatre party, including a number of the most influential Chinese magnates who sat with us. The theatre was roomy, with a gallery running round three sides, and seats below that corresponded to the stalls. The play had been going on for some time, and would continue indefinitely a great deal longer. However, we were not expected to stay more than two or three hours, and certainly that was the limit of time our ears and nerves could endure.

Like all Chinese doings, play-acting involved an excruciating amount of noise. The efforts of the orchestra were untiring. One performer clashed huge cymbals exultantly, others banged upon drums and beat upon wood with sticks. The performance did not interfere with repairs to the stage, and workmen nailed and hammered while the actors complacently went on with their parts. The hammering was just as musical as the rest of the orchestration, and the voices of the performers penetrated piercingly above the din. The women's parts were taken by men. Their method of imitating the female voice was to pitch their own in an extraordinary high squeak that added to what seemed a general conspiracy to deafen the audience. The only stage scenery consisted of the workmen and a few unemployed coolies, and a mixed collection of beggars and babies, who threaded their way in and out between the actors in unruffled serenity, yet not in a manner calculated to add intensity to the play. All the same, Mandarin life was depicted in its most gorgeous finery, and the magnificence of the actors' costumes might well have excited the envy and emulation of Mr Beerbohm Tree.

By dint of stretching our imaginations, and holding our ears when the orchestra grew specially violent, we managed to gain a vague insight into the plot. This was not done without laboured explanations from our Chinese companions. The Belle and I had most questions to ask, but we had to let Joseph act as our spokesman. The Chinese "towkays" were models of courtesy, but they had a way of looking over our heads which reminded us that in quite recent times the mere mention of a woman was considered highly improper in Chinese society. The fact of the existence of woman it was thought only polite to ignore. Seated there by those condescending "towkays" the Belle and I began

to feel conscious of the impropriety of our existence—a most depressing sensation, as there seemed no panacea for such an unintentional lapse of decorum, and even Mrs Retale, or Mrs Grundy herself, could not deliver us from being what we unavoidably were. So Joseph inquired, on our behalf, why one of the actors was adorned with wings behind his head. It appeared he was the scholar who had passed the examination with highest marks.

“But why,” said Joseph, “have some of the men whitened noses?”

This was precisely what the Belle and I most wanted to know.

“That is to show you they are bad men—bad characters,” said the chief “towkay.”

I suppose he spoke the truth, though it seemed a strange way of emphasising villainy. But perhaps a Chinese might consider the red-nosed ruffian of British melodrama equally ridiculous.

We really hoped the play was becoming a little clear to us. We had discovered the heroine in distress, with a voice more than usually high-pitched and strident. We had assigned the rôle of hero to the winged scholar; and the villains, who seemed to predominate, were obvious with their noses chalked like billiard-cues. But just as we hoped to work up our enthusiasm the plot was interrupted for the time being by the arrival of a body of acrobats, who rushed in and went through marvellous gymnastics, while the orchestra never paused for one moment, and some of the actors marched in and hurried through their parts regardless of the opposition performance. At this point we intimated that we feared we would be obliged to leave before long. Thereupon the chief feature of the entertainment commenced. The most gorgeously attired men came on to the stage and kow-towed in

our direction. They were followed by a man in a white mask, who flung himself into the most remarkable attitudes in front of a big scroll, and then turned round and gesticulated violently with stiffened fingers. This, the "towkays" explained, was by way of conveying good wishes to Joseph. He repeated the same performance in front of another scroll—this time with the object of expressing good wishes to the ladies. The Belle and I felt relieved at being honoured so unexpectedly, and ventured to inquire why the performer did not express his felicitations in words. He was deaf and dumb, the "towkays" explained, as though such a qualification were almost a necessity to a tragedian, and as it mitigated noise, the Belle and I did not argue the point.

A huge banner was now hung across the stage. It was a presentation to Joseph, whose virtues were flaunted in gold Chinese characters on rich rose-pink satin embroidered in wonderful shades of purple and blue and green. Joseph grew quite embarrassed as the "towkays" attempted to translate all the encomiums unstintingly lavished upon him. He thought we had better be going, so there was much hand-shaking with the "towkays" before I was prepared for it, as I had quite anticipated shaking hands with myself in the orthodox Chinese way. Joseph did not take the banner away with him. Its glories and his virtues were to adorn the stage throughout the rest of the performance, and then it was to be sent to him to beautify his new home.

The time had come to set out for Pahang. Early one morning Joseph and I started by train, leaving behind a group of friends of varied complexions who had come to the station to see the last of us.

"And so good-bye, Kuala Lumpor," I said. "Capital of the Federated Malay States—town where Malays

are as scarce as possible. Isn't that rather a paradox, Joseph—one for which we are responsible? Is it justified?"

"Races, like individuals, must work out their own salvation," said Joseph, making one of his ponderous statements. "The Malays are given every opportunity. Like the rest of us, it's a case of take it or leave it. It's a little abrupt for them, perhaps, to be plunged into the up-to-date straight out of the feudal system, but what brain-plotting, slow growth, gradual discontent, and all the rest of it they've been saved. This was a country where the Sultans had first right to everything, including every woman. Now every man, woman, and child has his or her rights unassailable, as far as we can make them so. Because this is what British rule tries to accomplish, we Britishers are the pioneers of civilisation over the world."

"Bravo! Joseph," I said. "You'll have to stand as absentees' candidate in the Federal Parliament of the future."

Joseph looked contemplative. One of his air-castles was local home rule, a Federal Imperial Parliament, and voting possibilities for the civilians, soldiers, sailors, and all makers of Empire abroad.

The railway from Kuala Lumpor to Kuala Kubu runs through the heart of the tin-mining country, where the jungle has been exterminated for miles. We watched the coolies run like distracted ants among the gaping mines and the women labourers carry the pans in which the tin is washed. This alluvial wealth must come to an end at last, but reef mining can be carried on then, and the riches of the eastern side of the Peninsula are as yet almost untouched.

At Kuala Kubu we left the train, for Pahang is still unconnected by rail with any of the western States. We stopped the night at the dainty little place nestling

at the foot of Bukit Kutu, its own particular hill. Next morning we started on our drive of twenty-two miles to the top of the mountain-range that forms the spinal column of the Malay Peninsula. The gradient of the road is so good that Bushranger could trot all the way in comfort, and at each mile we accomplished the air grew more light and fresh.

At Sangka Dua we stopped to rest in the verandah of the police station, where we looked out over the Sungei Selangor and the Chiling, two rushing rivers of clear sparkling water that came bouncing down the hill-sides. A little farther on their glory would have departed, for they would become tainted and jaundiced in colour, like most Malay streams, by washings for tin, which it suits Malay indolence to secure in this rather desultory way.

We continued our journey. On one side of the road a steep precipice sheered down, losing itself in a tangle of virgin forest. On the other side a high bank of jungle rose up like an impenetrable wall. Feathery bamboos threw up fresh shoots like spears. Julotong trees reared themselves tall and stately. Araks started their treacherous careers from the tops of high trees, swung themselves to the ground, and then sprang up afresh in unprincipled independence, flinging out tendrils like arms to strangle the very trees to which they owed their existence. It came to one as a shock to find the worst form of human depravity repeated in the heart of the jungle. In spite of all the luxurious growth, there was no mossy grass which looked tempting to sit upon. The serpent in Eden was too much in evidence, and more than one went wriggling across the road. Fortunately none of them were hamadryads, the most alarming species in the Peninsula, for they are ready to play the part of plaintiffs instead of being merely defendants, and have been known to

make their pursuit of a victim as remorseless as any lawsuit.

There were few flowers near the ground, though some of the bushes bore berries. One shrub looked like a raspberry-bush producing strawberries by mistake. The flowers—scentless orchids—grew so high above us that we had to strain our necks when we wanted to admire them. Here and there the jungle looked almost on fire, where trees blazed with a covering of the creeper which is the actual flame of the forest, though it has indulgently allowed a tree to assume the name. A troop of monkeys, called krahs, grinned at us as they swung from the branches; and away in the distance we could hear the conversation of their siamang kindred,—it sounded like the beating of drums. A blue-grey bird with a yellow breast persistently hopped in front of us, jerking its tail as it danced along in the most self-conscious affected way.

“What does that bird want?” I asked Joseph, who sometimes resented being appealed to for all the psychological workings of birds, insects, and animals, and accused me of alternately taking him to be simian or bovine.

“That’s the ‘p’landak minta ‘api,’ the mouse-deer’s mother-in-law,” he said. “You’d better not quarrel with her or you may get transformed in consequence.” He went on to explain that in the days of King Solomon, a favourite period with Malays, the mouse-deer was a person with a real live mother-in-law, who had an annoying trick of dancing in front of him. They quarrelled so violently over this habit that the son-in-law was changed into a mouse-deer and the mother-in-law into a bird which continues to dance in front of the mouse-deer, and in his absence evidently thought we would do as substitutes.

As the sun rose high in the sky a hush fell over the

jungle. The silence was so intense that we seemed to move through an enchanted forest. Slumber was the spell. Bird and beast were taking their afternoon siesta. Another stage of our journey was done. We reached the Semangko Pass, more familiarly known as the Gap, the summit of the mountain-range, where vistas opened to the east and west through the jungle.

In those days there was no substantial rest-house, and our only refuge was a tumble-down shanty which tottered on the edge of a precipice and looked in imminent danger of toppling over abruptly. We were not the only arrivals. The scanty accommodation was already filled to overflowing by a party of Australian miners from Raub, the pioneers, more or less, of gold-mining in Malaya. I gazed at them with interest. There is something so awe-inspiring about people who are making fortunes, though they generally have a modest habit of looking more than ordinarily ordinary.

"How do you do?" I said to one of the party whom Joseph presented to me.

"I'm very well indeed, thank you very much indeed. And thank you very much indeed for your great kindness in asking."

I was quite overwhelmed by this unexpected gratitude, and did not venture to say "how do you do" to the others for fear they might not have been so very well, and have imagined that I was inquiring for exact details of their particular ailments.

As the day waned the jungle awakened. There was buzzing and croaking and hooting on all sides. Presently a horn sounded.

"Ah! The bullock coach," said Joseph. "What a bore if we have to cram in some more people."

The horn continued to sound at intervals, but the coach seemed to get no nearer. About an hour passed by, but still no sign of any arrivals.

"That horn is getting on my nerves," I said at last. "Don't you think the coach must have broken down? They may be tooting for some one to go and help them."

It was not till I had insisted upon a relief-party being formed that Joseph made open confession that the horn was nothing more nor less than the serenade of a trumpeter beetle.

We were packed very tightly into the tottery edifice. Several of the men had to content themselves for the night with long chairs in the dining-room. I was given the best bedroom, which was partially exposed to the elements, and a shadow pantomime took place on the dilapidated ceiling of events in the adjacent apartment, only divided by a flimsy partition which nowhere attempted to make a connection with the roof. But what did it matter? What did anything matter compared with the blissful luxury of feeling cool? The wind blew refreshingly and soughed through the jungle like the lapping of waves on the shore. Inside the bungalow the sounds were less melodious, for the snores were pitched in such different keys that no musical genius could possibly have made them harmonise. But the night was short-lived. While it was still dark the Raub miners bestirred themselves and continued their journey. Joseph and I were more leisurely, as we knew that every step of the way the air would grow more hot and heavy.

About five miles from the Gap the jungle opened out and gave one a glorious vista. For miles and miles the forest stretched with all its myriad foliage, and here and there a Sakai clearing or the silver twist of a river faintly discernible. The village of Tras was in the valley below. Beyond the second range of hills Raub lay hidden. Highest of all the blue mountains stood out Gunong Tahan, between 10,000 and 12,000 feet

high, and thought to be the loftiest in the Peninsula. Below us stretched the largest Malay State, also believed to be the most wealthy in minerals. Alluvial tin has been little found, but lode-mining for tin and gold is being worked very successfully. The gold is considered the finest in the world, superior to the Australian: so at least we were told, but perhaps our informant was prejudiced. Although the view was so extended, little sign of human life was visible. As yet the trees and the creepers, the birds and the beasts, held fairly undisputed sovereignty over mile upon mile of gorgeous wilderness. But after passing Tras and driving some way along a lovely valley we came to Raub and the gold-mines. There all day long machinery hummed, and all night through it added its voice to the madrigals of the jungle. The white man had come with his contrivances and the white man would stay. Those who wish to tread untrodden byways had better make haste. Cook's tourists will soon get introductions to all the most remote and exclusive corners of either hemisphere.

CHAPTER XII.

PAHANG.

AFTER a night at Raub we started on the last stage of our journey, from time to time passing Malay houses and cultivated country by the river-side. Mud-bespattered buffaloes stared at us superciliously, as if they resented our intrusion and would like to express their annoyance forcibly with their horns. As far as the Malays are concerned, "a little child may lead them," like the lions in the millennium; but the odour of white people is said to be too much for their nerves, though it does not seem appropriate that such unsavoury creatures should be allowed to be so ultra-particular. The Malays we met made obeisance to the new "Tuan" who was come among them, but the moment I held up my glasses they were transfixed in paralytic surprise. They evidently considered that I was practising magic upon them, and those innocent pieces of tortoiseshell were undoubtedly their sole topic of conversation for days. Joseph begged me to put them away for fear they should undermine his influence with the people, but I absolutely refused. What was the use of exploring untrodden regions if one immediately pocketed one's eyes?

At Benta we stopped at the police station, which at that moment was proving its utility by the reception of a scared-looking Celestial whom a Dyak sergeant was

dragging in by the scruff of the neck. After practice in head-hunting, the latter no doubt found police work easy, and soon disposed of his victim and presented himself before us, looking the picture of martial smartness and displaying unbounded pride in his uniform. He seemed a worthy representative of manhood, for he looked as if he could be so alarming, which is more than can be said of most men nowadays. However, there are advantages in such disadvantages, as I came to the conclusion when Joseph unfolded a terrible story of one of the Dyak's compatriots who had been persuaded by a missionary to give up head-hunting and was jeered at in consequence by his lady-love. He at last undertook to satisfy her bloodthirsty propensities, and fulfilled his promise by bringing her the heads of her father, mother, brother, and rival admirer. Thereupon his tribesmen seized him and crammed him into a small bamboo pig-basket, where starvation ended his days. The lady-love must have felt sorry that she had not learned the lesson valuable to most women of all nationalities—namely, that if you prevent a man from having his own way, you will probably have cause to regret his method of carrying out yours.

At Benta we commenced our journey down the river—the water transit appropriate in a Malay state, even though the Resident's house-boat, which had been sent to meet us, was inclined to be too essentially European and comfortable. However, the Malay boatmen looked all that was orthodox as they tucked their "sarongs" up round them, and warbled a quaint melodious air composed of incessant triplets as they punted us down-stream. They sang too much in their throats to suit the Italian method, but the richness of their voices harmonised with the splashing of the water and the whirring flight of the wild-geese as we startled them from their haunts. "Didalam hati," the refrain

repeated, which means "in the heart," or "in the liver," to be more accurate. It seemed unromantic and hardly polite to glide down a river through a forest and listen to comments on the liver almost the entire time. However, the Malays ascribe all their sensibilities to it, and are probably more justified than we are in blaming our poor hearts. At any rate, the number of love-stories shows that they have had a very fair share of worry from one or other organ. Like young Lochinvar, they may be described as "gallant in love and daring in war" in spite of the laziness which one might think antagonistic to such energetic exploits. That forest-covered Pahang into which we were penetrating had known a long history of bloodshed and strife. It had been conquered by the Sultan Manser Shah of Malacca and at the same time remained under the influence of Siam, to which country it had every year to contribute the "bunga mas," a golden flower, in token of vassalage. All this time taxation overburdened the people. Legal decisions depended upon bribery. Punishments were barbarous, and not only actual debtors, but also their wives, children, and remotest descendants could be sold into slavery. In 1888 the murder of a Chinese-British subject, whose wife the Sultan coveted, led finally to the appointment of a British Resident and a new order of things. Pekan, on the sea coast, remained the royal capital; while the headquarters of British administration were moved to Kuala Lipis, in the depths of the jungle, where Joseph and I were now bound.

The poles splashed rhythmically in the water, and the tuneful triplets were echoed by soft rustlings in the trees. Monkeys peered at us inquisitively through the branches, and brilliant kingfishers skimmed the river as we glided past. Rattans crowded the banks in places, and feathery white flowers drooped from

bushes over the water's edge. Now and then we passed thatched houses in front of which smiling inhabitants squatted contentedly in the sunshine, and straight, stiff cocoanut-trees stalked like sentinels behind prosperous plantain groves. Again we left human habitations and listened to the chorus of the jungle birds. A rain-cloud burst overhead without interrupting the sunshine. The drops sparkled like diamonds as they danced on the surface of the stream. The rain ceased. The jungle was transfigured. The greenery turned, like Joseph's coat, into many colours, and the water gleamed like a flood of molten gold. Then the sun vanished after that parting benediction, so like the unearthly smile that lights up a dying face.

As the darkness descended we came to the end of our journey and scrambled up a steep bank, at the top of which a group of men were waiting to receive us, and the Resident escorted us a few steps farther to the Residency of Pahang.

The Resident was quite young, and held the reputation of being the best dressed man in the Peninsula. Particular by nature, he was a good deal worried by shortcomings in his official abode. To me it appeared a roomy comfortable house possessed of an upper storey, so I sang its praises as he showed me the way up-stairs to my room. But the Resident was lugubrious, and suggested that it would be a better plan to have the top floor a perfectly open space in which we could each pitch a little tent. I thought this a peculiar proposition, and so did not respond.

"The walls are made of split plaited bamboo, you see," he continued, as though everything would now be clear to my mind.

But I was not the least enlightened, and only remarked that they looked pretty and quaint.

But when the men came up to change for dinner

one was made aware that the lowest sigh was public property; and when I went into the corridor I found myself favoured with a full view of every room lighted by candle or lamp. So, for all its showy appearance, the Residency was not much more convenient than an erection of palm-leaves once put up to house a number of people at an elephant-kraal. When the leaves withered everybody was reduced to dressing in the dark over-night.

Whatever difficulties the Resident had to contend against were not made apparent by his faultless dress-suit and immaculate shirt-front. Later on he confided that he posted his shirts to the best "dhobi" in Singapore. I ventured to consider this an unnecessary extravagance, as the prisoners in the jail were employed upon laundry work.

"I should give them a course of the best lessons in washing," I suggested.

But the Resident objected that, as they were not all in on a life sentence, the courses might have to be repeated indefinitely, so he preferred to make use of the post and the washing capabilities of Singapore. Had we not been there, had he been dining alone in the wilds of the jungle, he would have been just as particular about his attire, and would have looked ready dressed for some smart social function in Mayfair. "Manners makyth man," according to the saying, and clothes make manners in more cases than one. A hermit who will change punctiliously for dinner may hope to emerge, after years in lonely jungles, without the wildness of eye and strangeness of demeanour only too likely to characterise those who have once allowed the authority of mind over matter to be relaxed in sartorial details.

Words cannot describe the bliss it was that first night to find a bed without mosquito-nets. There were

actually no buzzing torments at the Residency except a few fluffy-legged ones never known to sting. I slept the sleep of the just, but feared that I had awakened in a penitentiary of sinners, judging by an ominous clanking of chains that broke in next morning upon my repose. All sorts of other noises were going on outside, and I saw the dense jungle which surrounded the Residency, so knew that I had not been transported during my slumbers, but that I was safe and sound at the British headquarters of Pahang. Nevertheless the clanking of chains continued, so I thought I had better get up and investigate. I peeped out cautiously on to the verandah, and sure enough found it occupied by a gang of chained men. Before I recovered from my astonishment a Sikh in uniform appeared behind them, shouldering his musket in a pompous way. Then I noticed that each of the men carried a chatty of water, and I realised that these were the useful jail-birds engaged upon filling my bath.

I grew accustomed to having chained convicts to assist Ah Li in his lady's-maid's duties; but the first encounter with them was a little startling, and though it was very early, I renounced all further temptations of sleep. For one thing, there was far too much to listen to; though we had travelled far from ordinary white civilisation, we had come instead to a teeming, bustling metropolis of the animal world. Clear above the other jungle noises I heard "w-u-u-u-h, w-u-u-u-h"—a strange, soft, cooing sound; and noticed in a circle on the branches a conclave of what looked like queer old men, black in body, with white hair round their faces, long arms, and very short legs. Introduction was unnecessary. I knew at once that these were the black wa-was, or gibbon apes. They seemed tremendously busy, and looked as if they were holding a county council, though their accents were so dulcet as to make

one imagine that they must have assembled to recite poetry, or to improvise verses on love. The birds were equally conversational. The king crows, or "slaves of the monkey," to give them their less dignified Malay title, must have been holding a meeting on the advanced rights of women, they argued away with so much scolding and noise; then they evidently decided that it would be better to be thoroughly feminine, accomplished, and attractive, for they left off chattering and sang the prettiest couplets to show that they were really in capital voice, and fluttered out their trains of two long tail feathers, and seemed very conscious that there was nothing more becoming to wear than black. A horrid hawk disturbed the concert. He floated by, mewling like a kitten, but the birds were too busy to give way to nervousness, and the crows began to caw loudly, as if ordering him to be gone.

Before long there was a fresh interruption. Somebody in the jungle seemed possessed of the late Mr Gladstone's fancy for cutting down trees. "Chop, chop, chop," I heard, as though some one were hacking at a tree-trunk; then "chop, chop, chop, chop, chop," very fast, as if creaking timber were giving way. At this point the woodcutter appeared overcome with amusement, and gave vent to such shrieks of laughter that I could not help joining in, regardless of the bamboo walls of the establishment and the fact that the other inmates would have full benefit of my hilarity.

"What on earth are you making that row about?" asked Joseph, stalking into my room in his matutinal Malay array.

I told him that he had better instead inquire who was making the noise outside.

Before he could answer the wood-cutting commenced again: first slowly, "chop, chop, chop," then very fast,

"chop, chop, chop, chop, chop," followed once more by the uproarious "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

I could hardly believe Joseph when he told me that this noisy humorist was nothing more nor less than a bird, the largest of the hornbills—known to the Malays as the "burong hambat mentuah," or the "tebang mentuah," which, being translated, means "he who chopped down his mother-in-law." One flew by at the moment, and Joseph pointed it out. It was a great dark bird, with a long tail and a red neck and a red square-shaped casque at the top of its bill. The Malays have such satisfactory, fully explanatory stories about everything that I was sure they could account for its eccentric behaviour, and I declined to let Joseph depart till he had told me the legend of the "tebang mentuah."

It appeared that this hornbill was originally a man who was very much irritated by his mother-in-law. One day the old lady so tried his temper that he took an axe and chopped at the wooden piles that supported her house, and as the building came tumbling down he only roared with laughter instead of showing proper remorse. He was turned into a bird as a punishment, and is condemned to spend his time imitating all the sounds of the tragedy. Joseph went on to tell me that hornbills are said to build nests in the tree-trunks and close them in with clay, leaving enough room for the mother-bird to poke out her head for her meals. Her husband acts waiter and feeds her through the hole. According to the Malays, the wife unselfishly dies directly she has hatched her young, so that the maggots in her dead body may provide for their physical needs. The same forethought is also placed to the credit of another quite little bird, which is supposed to call out "tinggal anak" (good-bye, children) before she dies.

All the time Joseph was making these statements

a voice was reiterating "could do—could do—could do," till one's patience came to an end.

"What is it, and what could it do?" I asked Joseph, who announced it to be the jungle crow.

"If you wait long enough you'll hear it say it could do with a bit," he said, shuffling off to his bath.

I stood listening so long that I was late for breakfast, but never once did the jungle crow mention what it was it could do.

"It never said 'with a bit,'" I reproached Joseph, after I had shifted the whole responsibility of my unpunctuality upon the jungle crow.

"It all depends how long you wait," he said, while I groped in my mind for a simile sufficiently clumsy to compare to his attempts at a joke.

The Resident was always deeply interested when Joseph and I took to criticising each other; and as this happened repeatedly, he must have quite enjoyed our stay. I cannot have failed to have improved every one's Malay, for I wanted to know the name of everything, and made "How do you spell it?" my query from morning to night.

"You seem to take us for perambulating dictionaries," Joseph grumbled. "Besides, I don't see why you aspire to such accuracy. You generally assert everything with authority, whether you know anything about it or not—very reassuring, of course. It gives everybody confidence."

"When I know that I know a thing, of course I know that I know that I know it; and when I know that I don't know a thing, I expect you to know it, and so," I insisted, "riang riang—how would you write it?" For I kept Joseph to the point, and so am able to chronicle names correctly; or if I do make mistakes, I can shift the blame on to him. They are as he spelt them, and all Josephs seem able to bear responsibility.

"Riang riang," which he was writing down at the moment, was the name of a ridiculous insect. It spent the whole day in an imbecile way, making a noise like a rattle or some sort of infantile toy. Darwin would probably have explained that it was frightening away its enemies, enticing its mate, or using threatening language to rivals. More unsophisticated minds could not connect it with anything serious. It only sounded a most frivolous, babyish insect; and as it rattled away it seemed to convert the jungle into a mere nursery. One could agree with it that temptations to idleness were certainly great at Kuala Lipis. I succumbed to them entirely the first morning which I spent in a fascinating room, three sides of which opened on to the jungle. Every tiniest breath of breeze was able to steal in softly, and the birds perched on branches by the windows and practised their exercises. How persevering they were. No wonder birds sing well. One little creature went over the same scale hour after hour the whole day long. He knew it perfectly, so for the sake of his audience I begged him to try something else, or even sing the run in a different key. Not a bit of it! The bird repeated the scale without the least attention to my suggestion, and any one who pays the Malay Peninsula a visit will probably still hear it practised over and over again.

No human beings were to be seen from my sanctum, except an occasional Malay, who came floating by on the water, half, if not quite, asleep in his sampan. Two rivers meet by the Residency, the Jelai and the Lipis; two out of many tributaries, that finally, all combined, flow under the name of the Pahang river to Pekan, and their outlet into the China Sea.

That evening we explored the town. It was not a long operation, as we could only find two little streets, in both of which Chinese had already begun to trade.

The police barracks were to be turned into the future club. The tennis-courts were made. Government offices and a jail were also in being; and we walked about planning sites for the church, the hospital, the race-course, and everything else that would convert Kuala Lipis into a compeer of Kuala Lumpor and Taiping. The only road was the one that led to the mountains, so the rivers were our chief highways, as the unruly behaviour of the transport elephant prevented extended expeditions along the jungle tracks. Joseph owned a sampan which, with its "atap" roof and bamboo flooring, was lighter to punt up-stream than the Resident's more pretentious boat; so we made use of it one afternoon to pay a call at Kechau on an honorary Penghulu,—one of the many Englishmen who are also foreign dignitaries.

It was as well that he had just quitted his real Penghulu's establishment, as a Malay house has drawbacks in spite of being so picturesque. When the river was in flood the English Penghulu had been obliged to occupy his one apartment for weeks at a time in company with his cocks and hens and entire live stock. Now he had built himself a more Anglicised abode, which looked out over the river and a sandy beach to a gorge in the jungle opposite, where the houses of "Lubok Blida" (the Fish's Hole) squatted in a cluster on piles.

The Malays here were gold-mining in a primitive way that must have met with the scorn and derision of Raub. They stamped the earth and quartz, and threw away the mud and stones. They then placed the earth that was left in a flat-shaped pan, and cleverly spun this round and round in the river until the sand was washed away and the gold remained sticking to the bottom of the pan. It seemed such a simple, satisfactory method that I had thoughts of entering into im-

mediate partnership, but the English Penghulu feared the investment could never bring in five per cent, so, on the whole, it did not seem sufficiently lucrative.

After we returned from Kechau we allowed ourselves to be lazy, or rather made ourselves busy doing nothing, after the manner of the Malays. As usual, in the jungle they were having a social evening. The frogs tried to drown all other conversation, but could not silence a cricket which was chirping as piteously as a deserted chicken, or interrupt the unsociable banquet of the night-jar, which kept on repeating the inevitable "tgok, tgok, tgok." Now and again a distinct coo-ey rang out shrill and clear above the other sounds. It was not a benighted wanderer appealing for assistance, but only the argus-pheasant, which believes in being heard and not seen. This bashfulness about showing himself is all the more extraordinary as critics consider him handsomer than even the peacock. Possibly he is ashamed of his ungenerous behaviour, for, according to Malay legend, the argus-pheasant and the crow originally were equally dowdily dressed. They agreed to colour each other's feathers; but after the crow had performed the operation very tastefully for his friend, the argus-pheasant declined to decorate the crow, making it his excuse that the Day of Judgment was so near at hand. In the middle of the argument an inkpot was upset over the crow, who flew off in black dudgeon, and has hated the argus-pheasant ever since.

The coo-eyes were broken in upon by a curious sound, like powerful barking with a distinctly hungry accent, and yet a roar of commanding majesty. It was a royal bark, for the voice was that of his highness the tiger, who had come to drink at the river, and was now intimating that it was dinner-time in a considerate way that should have allowed his respective joints to scuttle off as fast as their legs could carry them. There

was something very awe-inspiring about that feline barking and its utter disdain for all idea of secrecy. Joseph grew excited. Malays had reported accounts of a tiger which had been doing mischief, and he knew they would be thankful to be rid of the animal, though superstitious reasons would keep them from killing him themselves. As usual, in their legends they honour the tiger with a human origin, and suppose him to have been a jungle waif who was rescued and sent to school by a benevolent Malay. His behaviour, unfortunately, was far from exemplary; and when the schoolmaster gave him a thrashing, he turned yellow with rage and bounced out at the door on all fours, with the scars of his chastisement marked round him in black stripes.¹

While the Resident was telling me this history Joseph was resolving upon a night up a tree, with a seductive buffalo calf tied as a bait to the trunk. Only scruples about the calf's enjoyment, and personal fears of mosquitoes, prevented my joining him. He was duly grateful for my absence; and, as it happened, the tiger did not reappear until dinner-time the next evening, when his presence was notified to Joseph, who went out and shot him between the soup and the fish.

He was a fine, full-grown animal, and though not a man-eater, had yet trespassed upon human habitations and made a nuisance of himself. So the Malays were delighted, and slung him to a pole, and carried him in triumph with his mouth strained open as if he were going to roar. How were the mighty fallen! He was now destined to be a door-mat, and tripping up intruders would form the extent of the prowess that could be achieved by his handsome skin.

Still, he ought to have known discretion, and tigers are plentiful in Malaya, though you might roam for days and days in the jungle and never see or hear a

¹ For Malay legends and customs see 'Malay Magic,' by W. Skeat.

sign of one. Most of the jungle population, including the wild Sakais, take to their heels and vanish at the approach of civilised man. At mid-day, in the grim silence, or at midnight, with its babble of voices, the spell of magic secrecy pervades the forest lands. They are full of tragedy and comedy, of stress of life and greedy opulence, but the passing stranger can probe no deeper into their mystery than into the throbbing, aching heart of western city worlds.

"Are you never lonely?" the Resident sometimes asked sympathetically.

"Lonely? Would it be possible in a vortex of society—the Vienna or Paris of birds and animals?"

The Resident gave a sigh as his only answer. In his kind eyes was the sadness of a man who, in spite of immaculate clothing and punctiliousness in all good habits, had lived too long cut off from his fellows in lonely jungles, where human society was entirely brown skinned.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAHANG.

KUALA LIPIS society at that time was quite imposing. There were half a dozen Government officers at the official headquarters of Pahang. They included two new cadets, who did not know whether to be more pleased with their fresh authority or with the possibilities of shooting which it had opened up for them. They extracted a promise that I would go with them on one of their expeditions, and I accordingly gave Ah Li strict injunctions to call me that morning punctually at five o'clock. But Joseph was always suspicious of any outings which he did not organise. He was callous as to the risks that befell me, provided only that he was there as chaperon. He had started me off on a journey to nowhere and left me to plod along in a broken-down gharri. He had subjected me to perils by water and to hazards on land—quite accidentally of course. But he pooh-poohed all dangers for which he was responsible, and only began to croak and make gloomy prognostications, and foresee all sorts of impossible misadventures when I took part in any expeditions which were in no way connected with him. The moment snipe-shooting was suggested Joseph immediately cautioned Ah Li on no account to call me before seven.

Poor Ah Li was much harassed by these contrary

directions, but hoped to strike the happy medium and satisfy both parties by a compromise. He called me at six, and in consequence drew down the vials of our respective wrath upon his attenuated pig-tail.

Of course I was most unpunctual for my appointment, but one cadet was still patiently waiting. The other had started in search of the snipe.

We were taken across the river in a tiny sampan, manned by two infantile Malay boys, who never left off staring at us with their great, startled eyes. On the opposite bank a man was busy fishing, and graciously disturbed what might have been a fine haul to satisfy our curiosity, and perhaps to show off his own skill. He cast his net with great dexterity and apparently with famous result. It took our combined forces, together with the elf-like assistance of the children, to haul the net up again. A fine log of wood was all that was enveloped in the meshes, and the poor fisherman's discomfiture was immense. Malays, like Sakais, did not seem fortunate at sport when I was an onlooker, so I suggested a forward movement after the snipe.

Before long we met the other cadet, proudly laden with trophies in the shape of fat birds, which almost owed it to us to be in good condition considering the trials of our morning's exercise. A snipe marsh was certainly one of the most tiring places ever invented for a constitutional. Wherever the ground looked trustworthy and secure was exactly the very spot where one sank lower and lower, until it seemed doubtful whether one would ever come up again. Wherever the ground looked treacherous and insecure it absolutely fulfilled all the conditions of its appearance. One was in the position of a person thrown into the society of people who are either covertly objectionable or else openly rude. Overhead, meantime, the sun

blazed in pitiless fury; thanks to Joseph's indiscreet order, I felt sunstroke was likely to be my doom. The cadets were so exhausted by pulling me out of the mire, and by sinking into it themselves at every spare interval, that the contents of the bag did not increase phenomenally. So, when we came to a lovely glade in the jungle that invited us to rest and refreshment, we decided to leave the snipe to enjoy the sun-scorched banks in peace. We found stalwart logs to sit on, and a fallen tree to do deputy for a table; while on a sampan in the river, a Chinese cook, who had come to meet us, prepared a breakfast sufficiently sumptuous to offer a king had a stray one chanced to appear. A stone, balanced on smouldering embers, served as kitchen, stove, and utensils; and on this primitive oven, even buffalo meat—our only joint at Kuala Lipis—acquired a dainty delicacy instead of its usual flavour of hashed boots and shoes. We used leaves for plates and straight twigs as chop-sticks, and found the only drawback to the meal the length of time it took to serve the courses, as the Malay attendants seemed incapable of carrying more than a single commodity, and even the salt-spoon and salt-cellar each required a special expedition to itself. However, we remembered Mr Kipling's admonition and refrained from bustling the East.

Patience was made easier by the number of topics upon which the cadets needed enlightenment, that I, as the only white woman in those jungles, could alone supply. Among other things, they wished for instruction upon the art of proposing, not having reached years which could appreciate as well as deplore single blessedness, and be aware that a special accompanist is not an absolute necessity to a creditable rendering of the Psalm of Life.

"I could never write, and I could never speak a

proposal," said one cadet. "I'd have to wire it,—that would be my only chance."

"Have to do without the wire here in Pahang," said the other. "I say, do you know the Resident wants to start wireless telegraphy to Pekan? Ordinary sort wouldn't do. Couldn't stick up poles through the jungle. Wireless is just the thing. Isn't Pahang going the pace?"

I quite agreed, remembering the Resident's idea of a motor-car service over the mountain-range. Wireless telegraphy and motor 'buses seemed suitably progressive for a country which at that time had only been dragged out of Oriental feudal stagnation for some dozen years. But I did not anticipate being able, in Kuala Lipis, to furnish the cadets with up-to-date instruction upon the topic of proposals that continued to harass their minds and tongues until we got back to the Residency and offended Joseph's sensibilities by our costumes, which seemed principally composed of tawny slime. The cadets were a little depressed at having severe criticisms passed upon what they considered a highly successful undertaking, but presented the Resident with the snipe by way of pacification, and were invited by him to tea that afternoon.

The post only found its way to Kuala Lipis two or three times a-week. It arrived that day the same time as the cadets, and all were ushered in together with the tea. There was a letter for me, and also a large wooden box. I wondered what could be inside, and Ah Li, the practical, determined to find out at once. He opened it, unasked, while I opened the letter—a very short one, from a man whom I vaguely remembered to have met once. It explained that he was not fluent with his pen, and that therefore the phonograph which he had taken the liberty of sending me would divulge all that he wished to say.

I was greatly surprised, but not more so than the others, when Ah Li produced the phonograph. I did not understand its mechanism, so naturally I invited Joseph and the Resident and the cadets to put it in working trim.

"What on earth has it come here for?" asked Joseph.

I could truthfully say I had no idea.

"It ought to have a speaking-trumpet stuck in or we shan't all be able to hear it," said the cadets. "How stupid! They don't seem to have sent one."

Suspecting nothing, I let them improvise a horn. They stuck it in after a good deal of fumbling, and the phonograph suddenly blurted out in rasping accents, "Dare I tell you of my feelings? May I lay bare my heart? Can you have suspected the truth?"

These interrogations were startling and incomprehensible. The cadets guffawed. The Resident grew animated. Joseph began to pace up and down the room. An unaccountable need of exercise overtakes him in all emergencies. "Do sit down," I entreated; while the phonograph continued—"That day when you came to—," but here something went wrong with the mechanism. It omitted a series of groans, and no actual words could be understood. The cadets, who were straining their ears with eager attention, readjusted different parts, and the phonograph again delivered its message, several sentences having been skipped. "—in your eyes," it continued, which did not convey much news. "Dare I hope?" Again it paused, not on account of its internal workings, but presumably on account of those of the speaker, who was either overcome by emotion or else at a loss for words. "Will you be—," it recommenced. Another pause, in which I collected my scattered wits. I knew instinctively the two words that were to follow. I could

not allow a heart and hand to be offered to me in public in this brazen way. Nature and upbringing intended me to be strictly truthful, but I felt a little prevarication was allowable in such an unprecedented case.

"I know—I'll explain—I understand," I said incoherently.

"Hush—sh," exclaimed the cadets, who grudged missing a single word.

"I said I'd criticise something a man is writing. He thought it would be more effective spoken through the phonograph." I grew bolder as the explanation sounded quite satisfactory. "He doesn't want other people to hear it yet though. Ah Li, take it up-stairs."

Ah Li inferred that by "it" the phonograph was intended. He looked at Joseph for contrary directions. Joseph's face was a blank. Ah Li gazed a moment at the talking-box and then retired to the back premises. He would have nothing to do with such a monstrosity—that was clear. The cadets and the Resident would have given me every assistance, but they were the general public, whom delicacy excluded at such a time.

"Joseph, help me!" I commanded. But Joseph's face remained impassive, while his legs betrayed his agitation by the increasing length of their strides.

"He—he—really doesn't want his publications published," I entreated; and by a mighty effort I dragged the phonograph out on to the verandah just as it was stridently inviting me to be its wife.

Several Malays were waiting in the garden. They paid the Resident daily visits in the hope that he might settle a family dispute. They invariably rejected his advice, and continued their diurnal attendance. They stared first at me, thinking my voice was very peculiar. Then they stared at the phonograph. "Take time. Think everything well over before you come to any

decision," so I was being advised in metallic nasal tones.

"The box is talking!" A lady Malay shrieked the discovery. Its effect was instantaneous. There were loud invocations to Allah and all the Jins (spirits) that inhabit the earth and air. Then, one after another, the Malays retired, not precipitately, for they were a martial people, but still there was a good deal of steady determination in the way in which they beat a retreat. Never again was the Resident called upon to settle that particular family difference. It received its final verdict from the mouth of the speaking-box.

"I say, we do want to come and listen," the cadets were calling from the drawing-room, while the phonograph croaked itself hoarse over fulsome compliments. The cadets and the Resident would wait no longer. They came just as "yet the same sun shines on us both" was being jerked out by the phonograph. I had a belated inspiration,—I tore off the horn and placed the rubber-tubes to my ears. "Oh! I say!" roared the disappointed cadets. They lost next to nothing. The phonograph had come to the end of its exertions. "I shall know no rest till I get your answer," it murmured confidentially, then it sighed and groaned and spluttered, and was still.

Now that the strain of concealment was over I appreciated the situation to such a painful degree that I was compelled to be completely taken up with the investigation of the instrument while the others made remarks.

"Jolly fine way to transport recitations," said one cadet.

"I tell you what," said the other, "it's a tip for you, old chap. What you were talking about, you know," and through the back of my head I felt them stare at me suspiciously, wondering whether a pro-

posal by phonograph were already a really accomplished fact.

I continued my close scrutiny of the mechanism till all had left for the tennis-courts except Joseph, to whom I then handed the written introduction I had received. He there and then echoed the hilarious sounds I was uttering, till Ah Li, peeping round the corner of the verandah, must have decided that the talking-box had driven us both stark, staring mad. It seemed a cruel destiny that brought a phonograph on such a delicate mission to a house with bamboo walls. But I concealed this fatality in a carefully-worded note which explained the necessity for the return of the phonograph, together with its escort of hopes. It was not until it and they had departed from us for ever that a horrible suspicion seized us that the mechanism might have been so arranged as to record my verbal reply. In this case the sender would have the benefit of Joseph's and my hilarity, to say nothing of the interest of the cadets, which might seem excessively out of place. However, originators must run the risks of innovation, and somebody or other should profit by every novel idea. This one had, at any rate, provided entertainment for a tea-party, and that surely was an achievement in itself. But what was more interesting was the fact that motor-cars, schemes for wireless telegraphy, and a proposal by phonograph, were realities in a country where, until recently, people had been tortured to extort confessions, lunatics caged like wild animals, and where men still tickled fish to catch them on that east coast where the north-east monsoon was now beating on the shores of Kelantan, Trengganu, and Patani—native states still under Siamese protection, and contributing their annual offering of a golden flower to Bangkok. Not many years ago Malay warriors had come down those rivers by the Residency

on rebellion and bloodshed intent, and sometimes ended their days in those jungles the most miserable of hunted fugitives. The names of Wan Bong of the chiefs of the Jelai, the Orang Kaya, To' Gajah, and other local celebrities became familiar to me as the half-dozen Government officers sat round the table after dinner and smoked and talked with masculine solemnity, each delivering himself in turn of his anecdote and requiring attention, instead of, like women, all talking together and no one expecting to be heard.

Sometimes a mining prospector or a hermit of some sort would find his way to Kuala Lipis and put up at the Residency for the night. "The poor chap won't have seen a white woman for goodness knows how long. He'll probably be frightened out of his wits and never open his mouth." So the Resident used considerably to warn me, but I never knew his prognostication come true. For one thing I had so many of what Joseph called "those confounded questions," and the moment a hermit finds his tongue he takes good care not to lose it again. Besides, the travellers often wanted feminine advice on a variety of subjects. One hermit, for example, confessed that he was furnishing a house in the jungle for the reception of a bride who, he acknowledged, still remained to be met, but some day, somewhere, she would appear to him, so he hoped. Meantime he made preparations gradually, and in imagination already enjoyed her society. I advised him, instead of troubling about cushions and curtains, to remain satisfied with the dream-lady, as he would then never need to be bored by always the same face opposite, since he could vary it from blonde to brunette as he chose. But it takes much to satisfy even a hermit. This one had the strange taste to be tired of the mere vision on account of her inability

to quarrel with him. "You see," he said mournfully, "disagreements do vary the tedium of life."

While the others were smoking the Resident would often steal away to the piano. When destiny banished him to jungles he gave himself music lessons and now played charmingly. By special request his repertoire always included a Malay air, with its quaint, rippling triplets, and then the child's song—the lament on the death of the linnet, the bereaved bird's pathetic plaint—

"Found in the garden dead in his beauty.

Oh! that a linnet should die in the spring!

Bury him, comrades, in pitiful duty,

Muffle the dinner-bell, solemnly ring."

Then the Resident would jump up from the music-stool and exclaim, "Only one year more and then—then England!"

"Why don't you go now? Leave is due to you; you need it."

But the Resident shook his head. "Can't go this year. Must get things here ship-shape."

He never mentioned the little word of four letters that has done so much in the building of Empire, but I knew it was "duty" that kept him that one fatal year longer which cut him off, like the linnet, in the spring of his career. But then, unconscious of death close before him, he used to wander out on to the verandah and congratulate the birds upon practising their scales and exercises so carefully, for it would be a long time before they could trill and carol and warble like the nightingales, the blackbirds, the thrushes, the robin-redbreasts at home.

How far away we felt in the jungle! The outside world was half forgotten. The haze gleamed white in the glare of noonday over unending vistas of trees. Far beyond the haunts of the Sakais there might still

be some timid Semangs, Negrito survivors of the first human race that ever inhabited the land. They are said to know the arts of monkeys and to be able to swing themselves from tree to tree. But their accomplishments are those of their progenitors. They seem to have acquired none of their own, and are dwindling fast, like all who depend upon ancestors, instead of doing something to give their descendants just reason for pride. And farther still, beyond the mountains, whispered legends told of pale-faced Amazons who allow no man among them, but are married to the evening breeze.

When it grew too dark for tennis we took drives to exercise Bushranger down the one and only road. The evening star trailed a train of golden glory over the river, which peeped at us through the interlaced branches of trees that flung sombre shadows across the road. Sometimes there were pattering footsteps behind us, and a Chinese followed in close pursuit for fear of highway robbers, or perhaps because he had been frightened by Malay stories of vampires that eat round holes in corpses and then fill them with plantain leaves. The offensive language of the jungle-cats was enough to bring any one to the conclusion that all the powers of darkness had broken loose. When the time came for the Chinese New Year, great bonfires blazed in its honour and illuminated the road. The Chinese, moving behind triumphal archways of coloured paper, were stained blood-red in the firelight, while the flames shot upwards exultantly as if they wanted to pierce the purple clouds that rested over the jungle and mingled with the evening lightning which shimmered low in the sky.

The holiday-making was general, as the Malays celebrated their "Hari Raia" (great day), which comes at the close of Ramadan, the Mohammedan month of

fasting, at the same time that year as the Chinese commenced their new round of moons. The Chinese New Year is a specially important festival, because all debts have to be settled then or else left to stand over for another year; in consequence, other people's property has special attractions for the impecunious towards the approach of New Year's day. Presents are also expected to assist pecuniary difficulties; but as I was not aware of this, poor Ah Li went about looking the most abject picture of woe. Had he been asked to decide upon the region of the affections, instead of suggesting the heart or the liver, he would have indicated his pocket no doubt.

There was one very angry Chinese in Kuala Lipis who paused in the middle of New Year feasting to come and pour out his grievance at the Residency. His brother had died, and he had left his remains in a kerosene tin under his bed in his hut in the jungle until he could accomplish their removal to his native land. But a miserable tragedy had happened. A foolish Tamil had come along, and, thinking it a pity to find a useful tin full of what he considered mere rubbish, he had emptied the remains into the jungle and carried the tin away. As the Resident could hardly be expected to search for the lost property, he did not see how he could be of much assistance, and his attention was required for affairs nearer home, as a Sikh had just thrown his child's dead body into the river by the Residency. While local matters were so olfactorily pressing, there would have been growing danger of our jungle community monopolising all our senses had it not been for those posts which penetrated two or three times a-week to Kuala Lipis and were bringing us terrible news.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM PAHANG *VIA* SINGAPORE AND PENANG TO CEYLON.

JUST before the birth of this twentieth century there was, as every one too well remembers, a miserable, anxious period in which mother England and all her dependencies put on sackcloth and ashes for the sons who were giving up their lives for the Empire's sake. We in our jungle community also waited and watched for the telegrams and pathetic war news which could only reach us every few days. The offer of a Straits' contingent was not accepted, but rifle corps were started all over the Peninsula,—even the jungle grew dangerous from promiscuous practising. Joseph and the cadets scouted through Kuala Lipis, and the Sikhs held shooting competitions at which I presented the prizes and murmured “Bahut achcha” (very good)—at that time my one and only Hindustani compliment—to the tall warriors who would be fine specimens of manhood if only a little less thin in the leg.

Joseph had to renounce the distant for the present and invariably less inviting duty and make a tour through his jungle-covered district. Just at the same time the Resident had to go to Kuala Lumpur, and I had to start for India on my visit to Benjamin and Anemone. So once again bullock-carts were sent ahead of us and journeying recommenced. The more interesting route would have been by river to Pekan, and from

there by sea to Singapore, but as the north-east monsoon was inclined to be obstreperous we travelled back by the same way that we came, Joseph escorting me as far as the mountain-range. We set out in his sampan, but the boatmen did not indulge in much singing; they had to be economical with their breath. It took them almost all day to punt us up-stream to Benta, and a crouching attitude under the "atap" roof grew painfully monotonous, especially when the cook converted his stone into an oven and gave us the benefit of clouds of smoke in our eyes. It was a relief to meet Bushranger and the trap at Benta, and a still greater relief to find ourselves at last safe at Raub.

Next day we climbed the mountains, and I waved good-bye to the blue and grey and purple tints that stretched into the dreamy distance of forest-clad Pahang. In contrast to these æsthetic shades the jungle through which we passed was gorgeous in new spring fashions. Instead of taking to finery in old age, those tropical leaves wore a blaze of colour in their earliest infancy. Everywhere the more sombre foliage of the forest was lightened by brilliant tones of pink, yellow, red, and even gay vermilion. Streamers of creepers tumbled pell-mell from the trees, and gaudy butterflies danced *pas seuls* in the sunshine. Mouse-deer mothers-in-law flew out by the score and took it in turn to hop in front of Bushranger, who snorted at them in great indignation.

At the decrepit rest-house we waylaid the postal bullock-cart, and the news which it brought me was decidedly disconcerting. Benjamin had been suddenly ordered to England, so my visit to India could not take place, and my plans had to be altered entirely. This was embarrassing, owing to my family circle at home including a grandmother born in the reign of

George III. and possessed of a rooted objection to innovations like cables and unexpected arrivals. On her account I should have to wait somewhere while I sent a written announcement of my home-coming, unless I could travel by a sailing-ship so as to prolong the journey. This idea horrified Joseph, who was most anxious to arrange plans for me, and seemed hurt in his feelings because I insisted upon their shaping themselves. With human contrariness one objects to people's solicitude until it fails one, when one feels equally aggrieved and ill-used by its loss. Joseph and I would have been doomed to spend the night arguing over arrangements had not the Resident grown sleepy and suggested that a good rest might bring about a solution of some sort. Next morning we had to start early, and as Joseph could not come any farther the Resident and I left him behind on the hill-top, the picture of desolation, all on account of my immediate future, which was chaotic as far as he could foresee.

There is no need to dwell on the journey, which was commenced by the gharri pony falling flat on his nose. I stopped to pay visits at Kuala Kubu and Kuala Lumpor, and wrote and assured Joseph that sailing-vessels were impracticable, as they only had out-of-the-way routes by Australia and San Francisco, and declined to pick up passengers and take them direct to England from Singapore. In my own mind I determined to fall back upon cousins, who, on the whole, are satisfactory relations, as they are sufficiently connected to be useful and sufficiently disconnected to have no claims to authority, though they sometimes usurp them, it is true. Unknown cousins had already helped me round the planet, and I had promised to pay a visit to some known cousins in Ceylon. They did not expect me until after I left India. Whether they could have me

now was another matter. I decided to go and find out, and, meantime, to break my journey with friends at Singapore.

The voyage there was chiefly occupied in gaining hints on Chinese hair-dressing, as a rich Towkay was on board with a very smart wife. She turned the saloon into a hair-dressing establishment, and sat down in my place at table, while an attendant rubbed her head with greased sticks till it shone as brightly as new patent leather. The lady rolled cigarettes all the time, and smoked and showed off like a regular "smart set" woman, which very likely was just what she considered herself.

Once more we steamed past the lovely islands to the green sampan-dotted waters of Singapore harbour, where a strange looking flat-bottomed craft came snorting up beside us, and we wondered why a military man on board her was holding such a long conversation through a megaphone. Suddenly the captain of our steamer descended from the bridge, and announced, "I think you are being addressed," whereupon I realised that "Are you there, Miss Griselda March?" was the question that was being shouted aloud. I was getting accustomed to unexpected appearances of hosts, and soon understood that my latest—a Royal Engineer officer—had come to take me on board the submarine mining launch. The vessel was useful, if not ornamental, and took my host's sister and me to Singapore whenever we wanted to go shopping or to pay calls. My host spent most of his time in her, prowling about among the defences of that most important naval base. He would have liked to play the part of detective had he not considered it useless, owing to the communicative character of the Government. "We're supposed to be reserved, as individuals," he grumbled. "Well! we certainly make up for it as a community. We seem to

think it our first duty to take our enemies into our confidence. Actually,—would you believe it?—they caught a naval chap, an officer off a Russian gun-boat,—caught him red-handed, trespassing all over the fortifications. He said he was looking for butterflies. Would you believe it? they let him off—in fact, they apologised to him profusely,” — and so on, adding anecdote after anecdote, to show how all efforts were taken to avoid Imperial secretiveness.

Instead of a picturesque sailing-ship, I left Singapore on an ordinary P. and O. liner, but we were treated to a small excitement, to give some zest to the start. Half an hour before the departure - bell sounded a Chinese was hurried on board under the protection of the police. A shiver passed through the passengers. They realised the Orient at that moment, for the information was whispered that this was Kang Yu Wei, the celebrated Chinese reformer and author,—Kang Yu Wei, with a price on his head, and forty Chinese deputed by his sovereign lady to carry him, dead or alive, to China. Interest grew intense at this romantic news. Every Celestial on deck, we decided, must be either Kang or else one of Kang's intending murderers. But at Penang all the Chinese passengers left the vessel. It then transpired that Kang's embarkation had been a mere blind. He had changed into a disguise, and at the last moment had slipped away to Blakang Mati, the artillery island. Enthusiasm was damped. Quite a dejected party set out to see the sights of Penang, and these eventually evolved themselves into nothing more nor less than a funeral. The widow of a Chinese millionaire had just died, and as no dollars had been spared to give her body an elaborate burial, the whole of Penang was obstructed by her funeral *cortège*.

The head of the procession—a gigantic paper figure,

no less than fifteen feet high—quite terrified some of the passengers, for it was none other than Satan casting out Satan, according to the Chinese, who insist upon the attendance of “Khye Lor Sin,”¹ the king of the devils, at funerals, so that he may overawe other demons and keep them from troubling the spirits of the deceased. In this case his Satanic majesty looked thoroughly equal to his mission as he loomed into view, armed with a spear and shield, and attended by youths with painted faces representing demons of a lesser sort. Then followed a long procession of men carrying banners, on which were blazoned inscriptions that were complimentary, no doubt. Behind came the bandsmen, banging and clashing and clattering gongs, cymbals, and clarionets. Other men carried decorated sedan - chairs and tables covered with slaughtered animals and other choice fare for the dead ; while the gharri ponies, happily freed from the gharri, made themselves useful carrying small Chinese children, decked out in vivid red and green garments and all their showiest finery. At last came the coffin, supported by means of cross sticks on the shoulders of over a hundred bearers, and surmounted by an enormous gilt and scarlet two-storied canopy, that collided every few minutes with the telegraph-wires overhead. The figure of a stork kept guard on top of it, and wreaths of flowers were hung round the sides. Behind it followed a fantastic car, drawn by a pony, and containing priests chanting prayers for the repose of the soul. The principal male mourners, arrayed in sackcloth, walked beside the coffin, with lowered heads ; while the more distant relations and men friends followed, and the women mourners brought up the rear. Some friends of Joseph’s were invited to the cemetery, where refreshments were served under canvas, and the mourners

¹ Literally, Clear Way Spirit.

displayed cosmopolitan millionaire tendencies, and were lavish with bad champagne.

As a proper climax to a funeral, extreme melancholia overtook me when we reached the Indian Ocean and the boisterous excited waves. With the exception of my Singapore friends no one knew precisely what had become of me. The condition of the elements and the closing of the port-hole led to a state of misery unattainable except on equatorial seas. Yet, for some unknown reason, I chose that occasion to wash my hair and write fragmentary verses in the intervals of getting it dry.

Farewell ! Malayan jungles !
Your mangrove-covered shore
I'm leaving far behind me,
Farewell for evermore !

Beneath a sampan's kajang¹
I'll never float again,
And hear the jungle choir,
Low wind or patt'ring rain.

The wa-was' plaintive chorus
I'll hear again no more,
Nor buzz of insect gossip,
Wild wit and jungle lore.

The birds will tell love-stories
In other forest shades,
But gentle, soft-voiced gibbons,
Live in Malayan glades.

So, in this sad leave-taking,
Above all I deplore
The hopelessness of hearing
The wa-was any more !

Such a sad effusion is the best evidence of the sea-stricken condition of my feelings, and the wa-was for whom I was mourning, if they had heard it, would have squirmed on the branches and crooned "W-u-u-u-u-h,"

¹ Thatched roof.

in shame at such a lament. But as my hair dried my spirits recovered, and I went up on deck to take stock of the new and yet most familiar surroundings, for passengers on board ship seem always reduced to types, and are as recognisable on every boat as all other cognisant parts of a steamer.

There were several officers bound for the war in South Africa,—all of them with features drilled into orthodox martial similitude. There was a forlorn little old man, who crawled about the deck like a fly escaped from a beer-jug, and whose solitary item of information consisted of the announcement, "I've lived over forty years in the Straits Settlements—over forty years!" He looked upon himself as an advertisement, and had not the faintest notion that everybody else regarded him as a horrible warning, so much so that I felt compelled to champion all matters Malayan, with the result that I was soon considered an indisputable authority upon the Malay Archipelago. An American Civil War hero who, being forced to give up fighting, had taken to poetising, followed me about with a note-book, and the trustful confidence of a tourist ready to imbibe any and every scrap of information for dissemination among the untravelled at home.

The tranquillity of the vessel was constantly disturbed by sudden inroads from rabbits and mice, which came scrambling over the deck in a thoroughly land-lubberish way. The captain declined to be held responsible for the pressgang which had so unnecessarily converted these unfortunates into terrified mariners.

"If passengers buy tickets for animals who's to prevent their bringing them on board?" he demanded.

The P. and O. Company have, as a matter of fact—but that has happened since.

The captain's query was immediately followed by endless inquiries as to which passenger had such a

passion for natural history as to travel with a convoy of rabbits and mice. The individual was stated to be a Russian, located in the second class, and we were informed that his fellow-voyagers also included quite a hundred birds, or rather had done so when he came on board, but the number was diminishing, as he flung them out by handfuls every day to a freedom that culminated in a salt-water grave.

I headed a linguistic deputation to the second saloon to expostulate in French, German, Italian, and Malay, but the Russian remained deaf to all protests that were not uttered in his mother-tongue. He seemed to practise originality, judging by his costume, which was composed half of brown velvet and half of yellow khaki, with sea-boots to complete it when we first beheld him; but he removed these, and received us in pink stockings and beaded shoes. He had the face of a mystic, with a cream-coloured complexion, soft brown hair brushed high above his forehead, and blue eyes like a little child's. "Finis—Seelen—libre—frei," was the only intelligible information we could extract from him, though he flung out his arms and began a rapid discourse in his native language, evidently a dissertation on the freeing of spirits, though his Buddhism seemed topsy-turvy, involving as it did destruction of bodily life. However, our persuasions were so far successful that no more birds were loosed to destruction, and the rabbits and mice had their meals in their cages, instead of themselves being turned into joints for the benefit of the ship's cat.

That voyage I again discovered loneliness to be the one condition impossible when travelling alone. So, at least, it seemed when a cheery-looking widow offered me the solace of her society just the same moment that the captain insisted upon lending me his personal, particular chair, which had "Commander" stamped

in large letters across it; and the chief officer called up a dozen Lascars to readjust the awning to keep the glare off my eyes; and the fourth officer begged to be allowed to fetch up items of baggage from the hold at irregular hours, which was heroic of him, considering our proximity to the equator; and the army officers came up alternately to offer lime-squashes and orange-ade; and the American ex-general hastily dotted down my observations in his note-book; and the official from Singapore informed me for the fortieth time that he had "lived over forty years in the Straits Settlements—over forty years." That is the degree of solitude to which a young woman is reduced when she travels alone; and the only safeguard for such voyaging is a sheer impossibility of ever believing in danger of any sort, for according to your expectations so shall your realisations be, or, if they should not, then you can fancy that they are, which comes to much the same in the end. A lively but well-disciplined imagination can be a great factor of success. In any case, in globular tours the most enviable *rôle* is that of a young woman of whom nothing is expected, except that she should be at perfect liberty to expect everything of everybody else. I found I could always provide employment for a whole steamer-load of people in the matter of giving me help. But there were occasions when I did much better without it. Business transactions, for instance, were infinitely more satisfactory when I undertook them by myself. I hope I did not presume upon being a woman, for that is said to be a heinous offence, though, after all, men enjoy endless privileges, simply on account of being masculine, and no one accuses them of presuming upon being men. At any rate, it was allowable to presume upon past knowledge and experience when we came to Ceylon, for this was the corner of the globe from which my earthly

pilgrimage had its starting-point, and in which the first decade of my existence had been spent. The long fringe of cocoa-nut trees and the shadowy hills in the blue distance were as familiar as the catamarans dipping their noses in the water, and the long-haired brown specimens of humanity that came scrambling all over the decks. The usual harbour babel commenced. "Very fine ruby, sah—500 rupees, sah. Can show good sapphire. Green sapphires, plenty got—all fashion now. Ladee, please to buy. Moonstone brooch wanting? This silver hair-pin. Singhalese women all wearing in hair. Ladee, looking here, please. Ivory elephant, ivory card-case. Have got ebony elephant. Kalutara baskets wanting? Me good man, asking right prices. Ladee, please to buy."

A number of passengers were encumbering themselves with bits of coloured glass at fancy prices, and congratulating themselves that bargains had been achieved.

"Ladee, please to buy. Looking here, big sapphire, pink sapphire, green sapphire, cat's eye, all got. Ladee, please to buy," and brown fingers flourished their wares.

"Go away; I'm not a passenger," I said with the scorn that I remembered to have heard applied to those words in the days of my earliest youth. Though they were by no means literally true at the moment their effect was magical. The salesman stepped back with humility, and I accomplished my monetary transaction—the conversion of dollars into rupees—with no disadvantage to myself, while the money-changer expressed no displeasure, but merely went away, looking resigned. When the ex-general, officers, &c., came to protect my finances from Oriental rapacity they were astonished to find that I had been favoured with a much better rate of exchange than any they had obtained.

But I did not divulge the secret, for it would have been useless for them to have asserted that they were not mere passengers unless they had known how to do so in the proper tone of voice.

The telegrams were posted up in the companion-way ; and as the news from South Africa was reassuring, every one went on shore in a cheery condition, though I was conscious of a few tremors, as I had still my cousins to find. This was another occasion, I felt, when extraneous assistance was better dispensed with, so I availed myself of none, except the guidance of some Singhalese of whom I inquired the way to my cousins' bungalow. They at once directed me to the lunatic asylum, which did not raise my spirits at all. In fact, under the circumstances such instructions seemed to have a personal impertinence that made me inclined to tell the rickshaw coolie to start off the opposite way. It took time to persuade oneself of the truth of them, for the mere fact of total ignorance of the subject in question never debars the Singhalese from giving advice. They speak English very fluently, and are a most quick-witted race, but the desire to be all-sufficient does not tend to make people reliable. They cringed round my rickshaw in marked contrast to the polite but sturdy, independent Malays, who look no more effeminate in their "sarongs" than Highlanders do in kilts ; but the low-country Singhalese in their "comboys"—the folds of cloth which they wear twisted round them—look as if they had tied up their legs in petticoats in order to pose as women, with their long hair dressed in feminine fashion with a comb stuck in above a knob at the back of the head. The appearance of the up-country Singhalese is more imposing and more in keeping with the past records of the race and its legendary ancestor the lion, who, according to the Mahawanso—a sacred book of Ceylon—was the grandfather of the hero Wijeya, the

first of a long line of Singhalese sovereigns, who came to Lacdiway (Ceylon) with 700 warriors on the date of Buddha's death and called the island Singhala, in memory of "Singha," his leonine grandpapa. History apparently does not explain whether the descendants wear such long hair by way of perpetuating the mane of their ancestor. They have, at any rate, had many centuries in which to modify the original shagginess, and all sorts of Portuguese and Dutch influences, as one realised as one rickshawed through the streets of what was once the old Dutch fort of Colombo, where fine white buildings contrasted with the red of the cabook roads, shaded by great suriya trees with lemon-coloured blossoms that turn purple as they fade.

Outside the fort the breakers were beating on Galle Face, the esplanade by the sea, the fashionable walk and drive of Colombo, nearly deserted now, for this was the hot weather and most people were away. Then we passed on down the Kollupitiya road—pronounced Colpetty for short—and into the Cinnamon Gardens, the chief residential quarter, where the roads were bordered by bungalows standing in their own grounds or compounds, to use the correct Anglo-Ceylonese word. Cinnamon itself will soon be no more than a memory in the Cinnamon Gardens, and people will have to go farther afield to find the cultivation of this earliest indigenous export of Ceylon; but as the rickshaw passed along there was such a delicious odour of terrestrial thanksgiving for munificent showers that the island seemed a vast temple filled with sweet savours—spices wafting their fragrance like incense to the honour and glory of the Lord of the earth.

Then we came to the Havelock race-course. The rickshaw coolie jerked his fingers towards a road that lay beside it and murmured inquiringly, "lunatic asylum?"

"Certainly not," I said; and at that moment, to my relief, caught sight of my cousin Dora playing with a baby on the verandah of a pretty bungalow.

"In there, in there," I directed the coolie.

The garden gates were open. The coolie shot the rickshaw up to the verandah.

"Dora!" I shouted.

Dora started up. She stared at me open-mouthed—turned white, then green, and dropped the baby.

"Griselda!" she gasped. "You aren't dead, are you, Griselda?"

"I suppose not," I said, just as if I were not sure, but I was so unprepared for the question.

"I thought you must be your ghost," Dora explained, and still seemed rather suspicious.

The baby howled. She rushed to pick it up, and I felt full of sudden sympathy for phantoms.

CHAPTER XV.

NUWARA ELIYA, DICKOYA.

WHEN my cousin Dora was at last convinced that I was not my own ghost, and began by degrees to understand the why and the wherefore of my sudden descent upon Ceylon, she persuaded me to stay on in the island and pay my promised visits, instead of merely stopping for a week, according to my original plan. I did not spend more than a few days with her, however, as the climatic conditions of February and March in Colombo were what one might imagine to be those of Purgatory. A sea breeze was usually to be felt, but in a room facing the land side one had either to do without any air at all or else run the risk of receiving the attentions of the land wind which prevailed at that time of year, and dispensed fevers, rheumatism, and chills of all kinds. If it blew upon one during sleep one might have awakened with a contorted countenance, so at least the ayah informed me, and I had to endure stifling to avert the other awful alternative.

Dora had two sisters in Ceylon—Laura, who was married to a planter and lived up country; and Norah, who lived with her mother in Nuwara Eliya, the principal health-resort. It was decided that I should go to Norah and her mother next.

The journey by rail from Colombo was easy, although it was unnecessarily prolonged on that particular occa-

sion, as the engine-driver had forgotten to bring the staff, and we had to possess our souls in patience for an hour while a coolie ran back to Colombo to fetch it. It seemed absurd of the train not to go on its own errands, but probably unaccommodating railway points necessitated the substitution of human legs. The delay prevented our making the proper connections at the different stations and involved a great many stoppages all the way. But as we gradually ascended the air grew cooler, and the views were so lovely that one did not mind being able to stare at them for more than the orthodox time. The swampy brown "padi" fields, from which the rice had lately been taken, were left sweltering below us in the low country, shrouded by a haze of heat. The mountains rose up into strange shapes, which accounted for such English appellations as the Bible Rock and the Sentry-box. Adam's Peak peered at us some distance away, and rivers fussed through the valleys as if they wanted to race our train as it curled round the sharp curves of the railway. Great precipices yawned below the carriage windows; and we passed under the jutting rock from which unfortunate prisoners used to be hurled when the Kandyan kings reigned supreme. After this the air became more and more chilly and the panorama even more vast and grand. But the mountains had a half-tamed appearance. The wild tangle of forest had for the most part been ruthlessly stripped off them, and stumpy tea bushes and lines of straggly grevillea trees furrowed their bare sides like the bars of a cage.

The railway now runs through Nuwara Eliya to Udupussellawa, but at that time it went no farther on our way than Nanu Oya, so that a coach had to take us on from there. After months of incessant heat and stickiness what a joy it was to feel healthily cold and be welcomed by a red, crackling fire and pull up the

blankets in bed. The Nuwara Eliya climate at that time of year had every qualification to content even a grumbling John Bull. By day the air was warmed by bright sunshine, and by night it was freshened by frost.

From my aunt's bungalow we had a fine view over the hill-surrounded plateau on which, at an altitude of 6200 ft. above the sea, the buildings are scattered which compose the modern Nuwara Eliya. In pre-historic times the mountain valley is supposed to have been the bed of a great lake; and later on, when the water was gone, the plain is believed to have been very densely populated, as the traces of an old irrigation system and remains of great aqueducts testify. Dr Davy, a brother of the famous Sir Humphrey, discovered the mountain retreat in 1812, since which time a race-course, clubs, and golf links have become aggressively British features of the plain; while beyond them an artificial lake, like a Highland loch, stretches to the hill-sides, and Pidurutallagalla, otherwise known as Mount Pedro, tilts its head higher than any other Ceylon mountain to a height of 8280 feet.

In the garden, roses, violets, and geraniums scented the air and seemed thoroughly appreciative of their own value so far from their native home. Norah and I used to go out early and pick tree tomatoes; and large wanderoo monkeys, peeping through the trees on the slopes of Mount Pedro, assured us that we were really in an eastern country, though it was hard to realise we were so close to the equator when we watched the Tamils pull their coverings artistically over themselves. They are blessed with the gift of gracefulness in all their ways, even in their shivers, which, among the chilly hills, are frequent and prolonged. This southern Indian race has not limited

itself to the kingdom it founded at Jaffna, but has spread over many other parts of the island in which the Singhalese are now few and far between. From the time of Siri Vijayaraja Singha, who began to reign in 1739, the Kandyan kings themselves could not claim any Singhalese blood. They were pure Tamils, though they succeeded to a Singhalese dynasty. No women in the world have better figures, better poised heads, or a statelier walk than the Tamils; and they attain these advantages very simply by carrying their burdens on their heads, an economical habit more beneficial to the appearance than any course of expensive lessons from deportment mistresses.

All round Nuwara Eliya are beautiful drives to the Moon Plains, the Horten Plains, the Rambodde Pass, the Barrack Plains' Lake, the Hakgalla Gardens. The Patanas, or grass lands, are varied by mountains covered with jungle or dotted with tea bushes, which are grown at an altitude of 7000 feet on the Scrubs tea estate. But a Government decree has now forbidden trees to be felled or tea to be cultivated higher than 5000 feet, so the jungle which remains round Nuwara Eliya may thankfully expect to be left undisturbed. The beautiful uplands are covered with rhododendrons, and keena trees, which look rather like cypresses, outstretch gaunt branches in disapproval of their companions' gaudy taste. There are feasts of impressions for globe-scouring tourists—but I was no mere passenger. I lived the life of the resident; I saw the country from the inside, not the outside, so I was not allowed to moon away too much time in looking about, but was pounced upon to take the part of a heroine, for Easter was a very gay time in Nuwara Eliya, and

theatricals were the order of the day. The records of my diary grew very monotonous.

- Monday* . Everybody very cranky at rehearsal.
Tuesday . Everybody in a better temper.
Wednesday . Rehearsal went shockingly.
Thursday . Hero said he couldn't make love to order.
Friday . Fresh hero found who could.
Saturday . Almost everybody made to change their parts.

Then we set to work again, and another week followed with almost the same statements, and so on, day after day we spent all the best hours rehearsing, ignoring the outdoor attractions of one of the loveliest places on earth. We were seldom free till the west was blazing with golden glory, and the silver moon, escorted by a shimmering planet, showed suspended overhead from a delicate pale-blue sky. Over Nanu Oya black clouds often lowered, split by jagged edges of lightning, and distant thunder grumbled in ominous contrast to the placid content of the luminous after-glow which crimsoned the lake on one side, while the other, shaded by the grey mountains, looked dark and grim as a scene in a tragedy.

Even when the theatricals were over and done with, and the audience had obligingly laughed and cried in the proper places, there was still very little time at one's own disposal, for it was Easter week, and there was a gymkhana, dances and parties of one sort or another to fill up nights and days. The Governor's little court was in residence at Queen's Cottage, so an official lustre was shed over the gaieties. In the days when, from the native's point of view, a good deal of

grandeur was associated with the office of Governor, these rulers were, from all accounts, unpretentious men. But now, in these equalising times, when the majesty of the individual is penetrating the Oriental mind, a Governor has to uphold his position and become so conscious of its weight that his guests have to rise to assist him with it whenever he enters the room, though he interprets this energy on their part as a mark of respect to the sovereign whom, even unofficially, he unceasingly represents. But, as Residents, Government Agents, Collectors, Commissioners, even District Officers all represent the sovereign at some time or another, people in British dependencies will soon have no opportunity at all for sitting if they have to stand before each of his Majesty's representatives. A sympathetic English public will really have to make a stir in the matter, as it did about London shop girls, and pass some measure through Parliament to enable a hasty use of camp-stools when his Majesty's representatives are looking the other way.

When the principal Nuwara Eliya festivities were over another round commenced in the tea districts. Each neighbourhood takes it in turn to have what is known as a "meet"—an assemblage of people from outlying places expected to amuse each other energetically. Norah went from one meet to another, and only seemed to accomplish the round by the time a new year started her off on a fresh course of tennis and dancing. The Dickoya meet was the next in prospect, and we set off a family party—my aunt, my aunt's aunt, Norah, the ayah, and I—to stay with Laura, who lived in the heart of the tea district.

My aunt had a shapely head, straight features, and the gift of perennial youth; while my aunt's aunt, aged about eighty, was even more juvenile in all her

ways. She took the greatest care of my aunt and forestalled all her wishes. If my aunt wanted to write a post-card, my aunt's aunt ran about and fetched pen and ink and cleared a table and ordered everybody out of the room, and put a chair ready and the post-card before my aunt, and then—my aunt wrote the post-card. So, with the help of my aunt's aunt, we accomplished the train journey to Hatton, where there was a great deal of confusion over sorting coolies and baggage. A conveyance had come to fetch us, but our boxes had to be entrusted to the swarthy natives, who slung them over their shoulders and trotted off, making as much noise as possible.

We drove sixteen miles along a road that wound among hills covered by tea bushes. Here and there patches of jungle remained, and grevilleas, the silver oaks of Australia, and eucalyptus, the Australian blue-gums, took off from the bareness of the tea estates on which these trees are planted in lines to give protection from wind and weather. At the end of the sixteen miles we had to exchange the carriage for the chairs which had been brought to meet us. Two were arm-chairs, and the other two were straight-backed. It was difficult to decide which were more uncomfortable, and I expatiated upon the merits of sedan-chairs in China, as we were jolted along the narrow path that wound higher and higher over hills monotonous with tea bushes. One was made painfully conscious of discrepancies in the height of the bearers, who had a mule-like habit of walking on the extreme edge of the path, which almost always overhung a steep precipice; and a rushing mountain torrent at the foot did not add increased fascination to the prospect of tumbling over. The torrent bounced over great boulders, past the tea factory,

and past a plantation of plantain trees, and a row of thatched huts known as the coolie lines. They were deserted, for even babies go out to work slung on their mothers' backs, and they begin to be wage-earners in their very early days, which is fortunate for them, all things considered, as the duties of parents are much more effectually practised by Tamils when the wellbeing of their offspring has a utilitarian claim. Just as we passed the coolie lines, a tom-tom was beaten, and a procession of men, women, and children filed down between the tea bushes to the factory, where the roll-call would be taken, and their day's labours recorded. Women and children do most of the plucking, and earn as much as the equivalent of fourpence a-day — an improvement on the three farthings which is said to be a common day's wage in Southern India. Only the very young leaves can be taken, for the younger the leaves the finer the quality of the tea. All sorts of duties fall to the men, such as weeding the plantations and pruning the bushes, which are systematically cut down year by year.

After passing the coolie lines the path grew still steeper, and the panting coolies shifted the chair-poles from shoulder to shoulder, until, grunting and groaning, they at last deposited us at the door of a bungalow so thickly covered with creepers that, instead of a house, it looked like a gigantic bird's nest. It was surrounded by a garden, where the flowers of Europe and Asia jostled each other in the most indiscriminate way. Heart's-ease and violets grew under tree-ferns. The lawn was sheltered by tree-daisies from the Nilgheries, and a huge orange tree in one corner was weighted down by a burden of fruit. There was red-leaved acalypha, clambering bignonia, and poinsettia with green leaves of one

shape and red leaves of another shape, from which oozed a white fluid like milk. Guavas and tree tomatoes offered refreshment, and strawberry beds stretched to a background of jungle that covered the hill behind the bungalow. In front, beyond the green lawn and the gay-coloured bushes, one looked down a great gorge, where the river frothed and gurgled between tea-covered hillsides; and in the far distance, purple mountains played hide-and-seek with the clouds. A jungle crow hooted in the strip of forest. It did not announce loudly "could do," like its Malay namesake, for the Ceylon jungle crow has got into the habit of not speaking clearly, and only mumbles some unintelligible sort of grunt. Ceylon robins flew from the trees to inspect us more closely. Another bird exclaimed "pretty, pretty, pretty," which was most complimentary to us; while a bright-green lizard, taking a constitutional among the rose bushes, suddenly turned red in the face and yellow in the body—a sign of rage, some one informed me, coupled with an apoplectic tendency, I suppose; but it seemed absurd it should lose its temper on account of the exuberant welcome which Laura was giving us. A white-turbaned servant made low salaams behind her, and several bronzed planters, who had ridden over from neighbouring tea estates, looked appropriately picturesque in riding-breeches and sun-helmets as they came up to help us out of our chairs. Then, as the sight of tea bushes does not destroy the tea appetite, we refreshed ourselves on the product, without which the Empire might almost be expected to tumble to pieces, for, as one of the planters observed, the foundation of British colonial enterprise is pretty nearly contemporaneous with the introduction of tea.

"There certainly could be no enterprise without it," said my aunt with decision, as she placidly sipped her fourth cup.

Nothing could have been pleasanter than to dream away days in such lovely surroundings, but the "meet" at Dickoya did not allow us to be idle for long. The gaieties began the next evening with a dance at the club. It was a long way off; and as nothing but mountain paths traversed most of the distance, we had to trust ourselves to the chair coolies, who stumbled along in the dark. The little monsoon, with the perversity of the elements, chose the occasion to announce the near approach of the south-west monsoon by descending in a torrent of rain. The north-east and south-west monsoons hold sway over Ceylon alternately from October to April and from April to October, and supply a rainfall in turn to the north-east and south-west parts of Ceylon. It would soon be the south-west monsoon's turn for the deluge, and the little monsoon most annoyingly chose the moment of our transit in ball-dresses to forewarn us of the fact. The coolies splashed about in the puddles, and as we could not see in the least where they were going we were spared the anxiety of watching for them to slip over the edge of the path. Their observations on the proceedings were incessant, and more than usually raucous, as the roar of the wind and the rain and the river did not facilitate conversation.

Among the people who had collected from far and near on chairs and rickshaws and horses I found the sister of an old schoolfellow, and before the meet was over I had promised to spend a couple of days in Maskeliya with the planter and his wife with whom she was staying at the time.

During the week that intervened before this visit I was oppressed by a strange restlessness. It even kept me awake in the night; and when everybody else was asleep I used to creep out and play the ghost in the garden, till the eucalyptus trees, with their silvery leaves shining white in the moonlight, themselves looked so much like apparitions that they checked my nocturnal explorations and drove me back in ignominious hurry to bed. I was invited to Maskeliya on a Wednesday, but I wrote and asked whether I might wait till the Thursday. My aunt, my aunt's aunt, Laura, and Norah, were all anxious to know why.

"Well," I said, feeling thankful that my aunt was superstitious, "almost all my misfortunes have happened on Wednesdays. Wednesday is my unlucky day, I think."

As my aunt was inclined to be sympathetic, my explanation sounded more satisfactory than it might have done otherwise. Unfortunately, my unknown hostess in Maskeliya replied that she must beg me to come on the Wednesday, as she had purposely arranged a gemming-party for that afternoon.

"Never mind," said my aunt; "when you arrive and find nothing bad has happened, you'll be able to leave off thinking Wednesday is your unlucky day."

As it was certainly a great nuisance to have to set aside one day of the week as unfortunate, I acknowledged that there would be some advantage if I could do that.

The round of gaiety had moved on to Kandy, so to Kandy Norah was also moving on. We had a scramble to start early enough on the Wednesday morning, and just at the last moment I was overwhelmed by a heterogeneous collection of belongings

which I was on the point of leaving behind. The coolies had gone ahead with my box, so the things had to be stuffed into a small bag, which bulged to repletion by the time it had absorbed a purse, candle-holders, a piece of special soap, a Queen's House invitation, extra hat-pins, sandwiches, a bottle of claret and water, and several books, without which I dared not stir—not that I ever looked into them when I took them, but, if I omitted them, all the information that I needed seemed invariably shut away in those unavailable volumes.

"I'll start ahead. You see I've the train to catch at Hatton," said Norah, as I stopped to thrust a tennis-racquet, tennis-shoes, sun-shades, and an umbrella into the carrying-chair.

"All right!" I answered amiably. Certainly there was no use in her waiting. Our respective roads only took us in the same direction for a short way.

"I'll leave you the best coolies, as you're not accustomed to rickshaws," she called, and vanished in the distance, so that I could not comment upon her remark, but, as I pointed out to Laura, my rickshaw experience was by now extensive, and I only wished I could mount Norah up behind Japanese and Chinese coolies and show her what rickshaw-pulling really is like.

"Any way, you're off on your travels now," said Laura. "Don't lose yourself in the country, or elope or do anything rash."

My farewell was jerky, as the coolies were jolting me down the rough path. We came to the road and found the rickshaw waiting with three strapping Tamils. One was to pull it in front and two were to push it behind. Half-way another rickshaw and other coolies from Maskeliya were to meet me, and

the last two of the twenty miles which lay before me I should have to accomplish in a carrying-chair.

I got into the rickshaw ; the bulging bag, the shoes, the bat, umbrella, and sun-shades were all put in beside me, and away we started full tilt. It was still early, and the keen mountain air was more than usually tingling and fresh. It infected the coolies, who raced down the road like high-spirited thorough-breds. The sun shone. The birds chirruped. The grevilleas bowed me good morning. The natives on the roadside salaamed as I whirled past. I felt so well and energetic that I almost wished I might put the coolie in the rickshaw and myself between the shafts. Yet, in spite of all this, I was attacked by melancholy, so much so that I began to weep in the most unaccountable way. It seemed such an anomaly to burst into tears when rushing through the air on such a glorious morning that I continued to cry from sheer astonishment at such folly, until the rickshaw nearly charged into some bullock-carts round a corner, and my tears dried as I realised that I was being whirled along at a positively break-neck pace.

The Japanese and Chinese know how to balance rickshaws by throwing their weight as required on either shaft, but a Tamil simply pulls a rickshaw along in a happy-go-lucky manner without understanding how to balance it in the least. I longed to tell the coolies to go slower, but was prevented by the practical difficulty of not knowing the Tamil for the word. Englishwomen in Ceylon do not, as a rule, make a very deep study of the Tamil language. The conversational topics of the coolies are said to be restricted generally to their food and pay and not always complimentary comments on the fair sex. Though these often seem matters of the deepest

interest, even to more exalted communities, they are hardly sufficiently stimulating to induce one to learn a fresh language so as to be able to take part. Still, paucity of language is always a drawback. "Zurika," I was on the point of shouting, when fortunately I remembered that "zurika" meant quick. I could tell the coolies to hurry, but I was incapable of telling them to go slowly. It was tantalising to sit tongue-tied and watch oneself being rushed into jeopardy all for want of knowledge of one miserable little word.

But I had not many moments for such contemplation, for the rickshaw men suddenly shot round a sharp corner just where the road sloped downhill across an aqueduct. Some coolies were working at the side of it, and a big hoe had been left sticking upright a few yards in front of us in the middle of the road. The rickshaw men could not stop at the pace they were going. They sprang to one side to avoid a collision, and I became unconscious of everything except a general upheaval, overturning, and smash!

CHAPTER XVI.

MASKELIYA.

I FOUND myself flat on my face on the road without the least notion how I came there. I noticed that the rickshaw coolies were fighting the road-menders, and that some Tamil women had left off picking tea-leaves and clustered round me, wailing in a melancholy chorus, "Ayoh! Ayoh! Ayoh!"

Another blank — then consciousness resumed by finding myself flat on my back with a very heated and bashful young Englishman standing over me.

"Can I be of any assistance?" he asked with great formality.

"Yes, please, help me to get up," I said in a hurry, for the sun was shining on me and I did not care to risk sunstroke.

When I tried to stand on my feet my left leg doubled under me, and looking down I saw that the foot was wobbling helplessly, and was so twisted that the heel had almost changed places with the toes.

"Dear me! I'm afraid I've broken my leg," I said in a deep tragic voice that would have been invaluable for the Nuwara Eliya theatricals.

The young man looked covered with confusion, and suggested that a tea factory was close by. It did not seem a very appropriate resort. I asked how far off I

was from my destination, but he had not the faintest idea. He explained that he was a "creeper,"—a new assistant learning his first duties on a tea estate,—and that he had not been a week in the island, which he seemed to consider a rather alarming place. All I could learn from him was "molle," the Tamil for slow. I crawled back into the rickshaw and dictated a telegram to a doctor, which he promised to send. The coolies collected my possessions,—books, hat-pins, soap, Queen's House invitation, &c.,—which were scattered all over the road. Then "molle, molle po" (slowly, slowly go), I commanded, and the rickshaw was drawn on cautiously at a walk. Even then the jolting was agonising and the pain almost unendurable. The sun shone, the sky was blue, the birds twittered, nothing was altered except my own point of view, and that now caused me to explore a new world of agony where the cries of humanity rang in my ears from sick-beds, from dungeons, from battle-fields. The whole of creation groaned and travailed with man, and dumb creatures made mute appeal against cruelty and torture. Life was hemmed in by pain from birth to death, and the possibilities of misery seemed as limitless as infinity. Yet if it were true, as Darwin taught, that the higher animals were evolved "from the war of nature, from famine and death," pain was shown to be the chisel of God, the instrument shaping creation, forming character, soul—the intangible personality which cannot be explained by any arrangement of molecular cells, even though such arrangement may be the primary foundation. Thus the shadow of the Cross fell athwart the earth, and Ideal Man lifted on the Cross became the Redeemer as He Himself was "made perfect through suffering."

Having conveniently shed my tears in advance, like the White Queen in "Alice through the Looking-glass," there was nothing to handicap me in getting my foot back into proper position. Taking my right foot as a guide, this was easy to accomplish, and the pain was so much lessened that it became bearable. The change to the second rickshaw was a trying undertaking, as from the coolies one neither received nor expected help, though the men from Maskeliya looked sympathetic by virtue of innocence, and the others distinctly ashamed of themselves. Once more we set off at a slow, tedious pace, and though the scenery was lovely my interest was absorbed by the ruts and stones on the rough cart-road. So on for wearisome miles and then another pause, while fresh coolies met us with a carrying-chair. It was long-shaped like a cradle, and I managed to roll into it with the inconvenient escort of the bag, the bat, the umbrella, and the sunshades. The coolies hoisted the chair and splashed into a wide rushing river, where the water was dashing over boulders and tumbling in frantic cascades. On the other side steep paths rose up before us, and the terrible journey seemed lengthening into eternity. The accident happened at nine in the morning, and it was two o'clock before I at last arrived. I stood up on one leg in the chair and dangled the other. "I'm sorry I'm late," I said, "but I'm afraid I've broken my leg."

The gemming-party had arrived hours before. They were growing cross and had been hungry for a long time.

"Her leg is broken," the hostess announced.

"Nonsense!" said the men. "She couldn't have travelled for fifteen miles in the heat of the day with

a broken leg and have arrived quite cool and collected. No man could have done it," they declared, just as though women did not do all sorts of things that men are unequal to. But the gemming-party felt depressed, and went and played tennis instead of searching for moonstones and sapphires.

The doctor appeared at five.

"Both bones broken," he announced, setting the smaller one, and explaining that I had set the big one myself when I twisted the foot into place.

He put the leg into splints, and mellowed the operation with compliments, while the Singhalese "appu" (butler), misunderstanding the facts of the case, hurried off with a big stick to belabour the innocent Maskeliya coolies.

In spite of an excess of kindness from my hosts and every one else, the days and nights that followed could not be enjoyable, though they improved when I could be carried into the garden on a long chair by four coolies, while the "appu" marched ahead brandishing his stick to encourage the others, though he himself took good care not to help.

The beautiful view did its best to make one forget all injuries. On all sides hills surrounded the garden, the higher ones covered with jungle, the lower ones hard at work growing tea.

Maskeliya is the nearest tea district to Adam's Peak, and it is from there that the easier ascent of the mountain is made. The steeper and from the pilgrim's point of view more profitable ascent is from Ratnapura, the "city of gems," so called from the precious stones found in its vicinity. Alexander the Great is believed to have fixed the chains which assist people up the mountain, which does not look as shapely and imposing from Maskeliya as it does from

the low country. When the Peak is seen from the becoming angle one understands the attentions paid it by the first three Buddhas of the present *Kalpa*, and wonders that Gautama should have visited the island three times before he took any notice of the "Woman of Ceylon," as the mountain is called in the *Raja Ratnacari*, one of the old sacred books. However, after the god Saman Dewa Raja had pointed out "this mighty rock, the name of which is Samana Coota (Adam's Peak), which appears like a rock of blue sapphire, and which, being five leagues high, is constantly touched by the passing clouds," Buddha, "turning his eyes to the east, beheld the spiral top of the elevated mountain as the woman of the island of Ceylon, with head lifted up, and with anxious expectation, looking out for the coming of her lord, on account of having been twice disappointed of her expected dowry—namely, the print of the foot of Buddha, who had twice come to Ceylon without having visited the said sacred place . . ." Gautama was touched, and said to her, "This day will I comfort thee, O thou woman of Ceylon, as other Buddhas have done"—and accordingly did so by ascending through the clouds with five hundred attendant ministers, and leaving the impression of his left foot on the summit of the mountain. "Thus Buddha comforted the woman of Ceylon."

All the same, he was a little dilatory in his attentions, and Samana Coota was more honoured by Adam, who, according to Mohammedan legend, was hurled there from Paradise, and remained poised on one leg for over two hundred years until the Angel Gabriel restored to him Eve, who had been prostrated at Mecca. I at once asked whether Adam's other leg had been broken, but no one was able to say; but if

it had not been he might just as well have stood on both legs, so I felt justified in having a fellow-feeling for him, and was consoled by the reflection that a broken leg in such a renowned vicinity ought to invest even the plaster of Paris with an odour of sanctity.

Most of the people on the estate were too busy to think about either Gautama or Adam. The tom-tom let no one forget that the day's work began at six o'clock. The coolies were counted and sent off in gangs to pluck and prune and weed and clear the surface-drains. Several times during the day the superintendent noted the weight of leaf plucked by each coolie, and according to the total at the close of the day, the pluckers were entitled to a whole or a half day's wage. Practice certainly made perfect over the operation. The women nipped the leaves off the bushes and tossed them into baskets on their backs with the rapidity of machines.

The sick coolies were doctored by their mistress, or "Dorisami," as she was known on the estate. None of them had much the matter except one poor creature afflicted by cancer, the result of a marital blow. Castor-oil appeared to be the most popular medicine; after a dose the patient went away licking his lips so as not to lose a drop of the delicacy. The Singhalese "appu" marshalled them up in turn to be treated. He was full of pomposity where Tamils were concerned, and overwhelmed with humility in the presence of white people. He had a horror of waste, and sometimes carried economy to lengths that were really alarming. One day he hurried in to his mistress, holding a most forlorn looking chicken.

"Please, lady, chicken very sick," he explained. "Better kill for dinner, otherwise soon die—then how can kill?"

As fowl was the most conspicuous item of the daily menu, our appetites fell off visibly till we saw that chicken interred.

An occasion of rejoicing, involving a whole holiday, came to pass for the coolies owing to the head Cangani being about to fetch a wife from India,—a fresh wife, presumably, as he seemed to have one lady already in evidence; however, she might have been a deceased wife's sister for all one could tell. Canganis are important people. They bring coolies over in batches from India, look after them and their finances, and administer castigations when such are thought to be necessary, which should not be often in these self-respecting days. It was therefore quite natural that the coolies should take an interest in the Cangani's approaching nuptials, and, as it happened, we heard of the relief of Mafeking most appropriately on the same day.

All the coolies were summoned to the garden, and the "Peria Dore" (master) made them a speech. He told them of "the victory to British arms, and congratulated them upon being the fortunate subjects of the good Rani, the great white Queen——"

"Hi-i-i-i-i," screeched the Tamil women in approving chorus.

"upon whose dominions the sun never ceased shining——"

"H-i-i-i-i-i," squealed the women.

"and which should always be lightened in the same way by liberty, justice, and truth."

"Yes," said the appu, who found it necessary to take part. "Kandyan kings' time no roof to our houses——"

The tom-toms drowned the rest of his discourse, and some of the men began to fence with long

sticks, making hideous grimaces, and throwing themselves into extraordinary attitudes. Some others did a stick dance, and followed it by a tom-tom dance, salaaming low to the Peria Dore before any fresh display. Meanwhile a small boy whirled round and round till we all felt giddy. His costume consisted of a girdle of leaves, and saffron-coloured lines painted over his body, his face also being of the same saffron hue. He was intended to represent a Veddah or Ceylonese aborigine.

The women were every bit as active. Their pet performance was to go round and round in a circle, bending forward and clapping their hands to the rhythm of a low chant which they crooned monotonously. After a time there was a pause, and the head Cangani made a speech about Mafeking,—at least that appeared to be the subject, as he repeated the name over and over again. No doubt he had discreetly retired round a corner and learnt it from the appu, who, of course, had at once mastered its intricacies. When the Cangani had finished, his particular lady stepped forward. She was a tall, handsome woman, and was draped in white muslin in graceful Tamil style. Bracelets and anklets jingled at every movement, and heavy ornaments hung from her nose and ears. She burst into a monotonous high-pitched croon, in which she sang the praises of the Peria Dore and the Dorisami, and the glories of the estate.

"H-i-i-i-i-i," squealed the other women in chorus at regular intervals.

"H-i-i-i-i-i," they were still squeaking to their own satisfaction when we went in to dinner, feeling almost as thirsty as if we had been performing, but somehow the drinks were not a success that even-

ing, and the Dorisami suddenly suggested that champagne had better be opened in which to drink to the relief of Mafeking. She did not take us into her confidence at the time, but we knew afterwards she had discovered that the soda-water had run out, and the appu, never at a loss, had made use of Eno's fruit salt as a substitute.

Naturally the appu was determined that the Singhalese should take part in the day's rejoicings, so some of the Tamils were converted into ebony statues, and held blazing torches to illuminate the scene. From the shadows stepped two figures in scarlet, gold-embroidered jackets and short, gold-embroidered petticoats fastened over their white "comboys." They wore gigantic masks, hideous beyond description, with protruding fangs and enormous goggle eyes. Tom-toms were beaten, a solitary fiddle scraped, and the devil-dancers began to twist and turn and wave their supple fingers, which seemed to take the chief part in the dance. The expressions of the masks looked enough to scare any number of devils, but the exorcism of demons did not seem to trouble the performers, who appeared to be engrossed in entertaining their audience. When they paused to rest, a boy emerged from the shadows and went through some slow, long-drawn-out contortions. He was resplendent in spangled green satin to represent a woman, who must have been the lady of nursery-rhyme notoriety, with

"Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes,"

for the jingling made by each movement was in itself a compressed symphony.

Once more the devil-dancers had a turn, and then

another couple appeared in white clothes with straw hats to represent "Master and Lady." As we did not understand whether they constituted the comic element of the entertainment, or whether they were intended to be a sober compliment, "Master and Lady" were rather at a loss to know how to express their sentiments. But that did not matter, for the irrepressible tom-tom beaters were thoroughly enjoying their evening, and thumped out their satisfaction long after the last exultant rocket had whizzed into the air, and bonfires on the hillsides had exhausted themselves doing honour to Mafeking.

CHAPTER XVII.

DICKOYA, RATNAPURA.

THE south-west monsoon had kindly delayed its coming, but after I had spent three weeks in Maskeliya we knew it could not postpone it much longer, so Laura came over to fetch me away before the torrents of rain should descend.

It was not easy to travel encased in plaster of Paris, but somehow the journey was accomplished, and the ayah ran out the first to welcome me, crying "Apah! Missie, Apah, Apah!" in a paroxysm of distress over my pitiable fate. She was a small Singhalese, very smart in a red "comboy" and a low-cut white jacket in which she braved the chilliness of the hills and showed off a pair of dimpled shoulders and a plump neck adorned by a coral chain. Her features were pretty and regular, and her black hair was oiled till it shone. She was vain of her nice white teeth, and consequently was chary of staining them red by chewing areca-nut. She did not care to be any one's ayah for long, but went from one mistress to another, collecting on her rounds a whole history of Ceylon society. Laura, Dora, and Norah were quite embarrassed by her publication of the private diaries of their friends, and we all felt we must behave with great decorum, as there was

no doubt that we should come in as "copy" for future use. But she was a cheery companion while the rains descended and the winds blew, for the monsoon had broken and clouds scampered up and down the valley. Adam's Peak and the other high mountains had wrapt themselves up in the mist. The river roared as it dashed past the huts and the plantain-trees, and endless little trickles came tumbling down the hills to join it and help to do the work at the factory, and start the machinery whizzing and whirring so as to provide civilisation with afternoon tea. After a week or so the rain became more intermittent and the sun shone out at intervals. The trees shook themselves dry in the wind, the flowers lifted their damp faces, and dowdy, old-maidish-looking birds, called the "seven sisters," chattered and squabbled over their housekeeping under an English oak which was being used as an umbrella by clambering passion-flowers and wild jungle "tangapu" in thoroughly colonial, unconventional style.

At the end of the sunshiny interludes, when the wind chased the clouds back and the deluge descended, the coolies sometimes carried me to the factory to watch the progress of the tea-leaves after they had left the squat little bushes and started on their business career. They were first passed to the upper storey of the factory, where they were spread out thinly on shelves of wire or jute hessian to wither and let the sap evaporate. Then they were swept together and passed down a shoot to the lower storey, where they were rolled by machinery to squeeze the tannin out. The mash that merged from the roller was next passed through a roll-breaker, by which the small fine leaves were sifted through a wire-mesh

on to a cloth below. Then they were spread in wooden frames until fermentation took place, being left a longer or shorter time according to whether black or green tea were to be the result. My aunt's aunt, who was an ardent temperance advocate, was so depressed the first time she discovered this that she utterly declined ever to be called a tee-totaler again. After fermentation the leaves were passed through the desiccator and emerged dry and brittle, and about 75 per cent lighter than they were in their raw state. The tea was then left for a night in bins to cool, and passed finally through sieves which arrested the different grades and automatically shot out their respective contents into chests ready to be divided, weighed, and packed. The best was the gold-tipped orange Pekoe, too strong to be used by itself.

The whole process of Ceylon tea-making is clean, but the planters would not allow that the same could be said of the methods in vogue in China, though the Chinese are supposed to have drunk, if not tea, at any rate some decoction of leaves for nearly five thousand years; while the first Ceylon tea was only planted in the Rambodde Pass in 1842, and was not cultivated in any quantity until the downfall of coffee, less than thirty years ago. In the low country it is already being superseded by rubber, some kinds of which, such as the Para (*Hevea Braziliensis*), grow well up to an altitude of about 3000 feet. As the price of clean plantation rubber has been over 6s. per lb., and the cost of producing it is about 2s. per lb., it has given just cause for popularity. But in the last year of the nineteenth century it was for the most part only in its infancy in the island (trees are not tapped until they are six years old), so one was

spared incessant conversation on the subject, and such enlightening observations as "Crêpe seems dull to-day, but worms are very firm."

Although it was entertaining to be carried along lovely hill-paths hoisted on the shoulders of picturesque coolies, it was cheering to be made independent again by freedom from plaster of Paris. It was disconcerting at first to find my injured limb converted into a sort of immovable tree-trunk, as though I were Daphne turning into a laurel over again, but I could measure improvement in the art of walking by the distances to the different gullies carpeted by maiden-hair ferns, which in Ceylon have a knack of making a garden of even a wilderness. Kind planters were often ready to assist my faltering footsteps. It was charming to have them there, and equally pleasant to do without them. The only way to enjoy and appreciate neighbours is by being quite independent of them, and with nature, as with one's other friends, one can only make real acquaintance by indulging in *tête-à-têtes*. It is a "still small voice" that we hear in nature, and it is in a "still small voice" that nature's Creator speaks, and nowhere can we listen better than when we climb, like Elijah, alone to the mountain-top.

A more material advantage, however, to be gained from clambering the hillsides was that it loosened stiffened muscles and taught me to walk again. Every halting footstep filled me with such exuberant pleasure that the prim little tea-bushes round me might have fancied a lunatic had broken loose. With the body in working order we are each of us a variety theatre of amusements; and though the chisel of pain may fall, it is only to shape us so that there may be scope for the drama of existence

to be more fully played. Considering the infinite possibilities of pleasure for those who have daily sufficiency, one wonders that the world has not learnt to be less at the mercy of sorrow in the overflowing superabundance of all that is given so richly to be enjoyed.

The corner of a hill near the bungalow was an ideal spot to watch the sunset; for then above the western mountains the sky was a vivid crimson, and the lowest depths of the valley were flooded with golden light. To the east the contrast was dismal: the river below was leaden, the grevilleas were dusky smudges, a daub of black marked the jungle, and the tea-bushes crouched asleep. In the west there was living daylight, but the east was shrouded by death-like night. The swirl of the water made music in the stillness—an improvised accompaniment to an impromptu song—

Good-bye, golden sunset! Good-bye, peep of heaven!
Although we turn back to the gloom and the night,
The sun's parting splendour as earnest is given,
From night we shall wake to day's fulness of light!

In spite of the monsoon Laura did not give us much time to indulge in monotony. We used to be carried miles to visit our neighbours, and callers had a habit of turning up at all hours in the most promiscuous way. We celebrated the taking of Pretoria, and the residents grumbled at the influx of Boer prisoners; while my aunt's aunt, who was growing a little deficient of hearing, thought the animals, boars, were in question, and curtailed her walks abroad. Then from the outside world came the bomb-like news that startled civilisation—the accounts of the real and imaginary massacres in

China and the siege of the Legations in Peking. The prospects of a prolonged war were looked upon as the usual wind of mixed good and evil. The planters hoped China tea might be ousted from the market and Ceylon tea given more chance. The poor planters felt hardly used. Profits had been growing smaller and smaller, although the retail price of tea in shops remained the same. They thought it hard to belong to an empire fitted out to be a co-operative store society, and find that the system of management shut up different departments and sent customers to shop outside.

One night I dreamed a dream, and went to my aunt for the interpretation. I dreamt I was on a big steamer which carried me a long, long way. Then I found myself on land in a flat, bare country. I stood on a dusty road. Soldiers were swarming round me, and suddenly an officer came thundering towards me on horseback.

"The man galloping on the horse means sudden tidings," interpreted my aunt. "You'll go away in a steamer, but not the way you expect. Instead, you will reach the country of your dream."

As I had a real journey to the low country before me, the dream-voyage was not of much apparent account. I said *au revoir*, as I thought, to every one, and the coolies carried me off on a chair. Higher and higher we mounted to the hilltops and the jungle, leaving Bogawantalawa, covered with mist like soap-suds, in the middle of having its bath. When we emerged from the jungle it was to a dry world of sunshine, in which the low country below us lay outspread in the noonday heat. Thatched roof-tops told of scattered villages; jungle sometimes made room politely for plantations,

and sometimes insisted upon its own right to a share of the soil; brilliant green patches were rice-fields which terraced the sides of the hills. Our way now lay always downwards. For the most part it was solitary, except for an occasional grim old man basking in the sunshine, with perhaps a pariah dog crouching opposite—the counterpart of himself.

The bungalow where I spent the night was at an altitude of 3500 feet—only 500 feet lower than the one at Bogawantalawa; but even this difference made a great change in the temperature, and a D.T. bird in the garden shrieked bad language in a livery, hot-weather way.

Next day we again descended, and the next bungalow I stayed at was at an altitude of less than 2000 feet. I looked out across unbroken jungle and realised that it was getting warm.

The following morning a river had to be forded, and, after being carried two more miles, I reached Balangoda and the coach. I was given the place of honour—the box-seat by the driver. The other passengers were brown-skinned, and made to take back seats. I soon contemplated the advisability of joining them, as the regard paid to my complexion was not an unmixed blessing, owing to the unlimited view the front seat afforded of the eccentric behaviour of the steeds. The first pair were most anxious to kick at starting, and were only prevented by their front legs being too shaky to allow them to raise their hind ones; so that they had to resign themselves to circumstances and shuffle on their way. At the next stage we changed horses by a precipice, apparently for the sake of the added excitement it might entail. The idea succeeded; what

with the plunging and shying, coach and all nearly toppled over the bank. The third pair had to have their movements accelerated by firebrands; and though the last pair went famously once they were started, one had to pull the coach by himself some way, while a horse-keeper ran beside him leading the other until he could surreptitiously hitch on the trailing traces and catch the sluggard unawares. Then the horse-keepers poised themselves on one leg on either side of the conveyance, and were ready at a moment's notice to jump down and mend the harness with string.

Owing to all these distractions it was difficult to pay proper attention to the scenery. The country was very pretty, but that is an accurate statement to make about almost any part of Ceylon. There were green hills looming near us and blue hills farther away. We passed jungle, and rice-fields where buffaloes wallowed, and under jak-trees with large green pods dangling out of the thick branches and trunks. Feathery palms and the great cool leaves of the plantains gave the foliage a grace and richness that have the same luxurious effect on one's powers of vision that the damp, steamy atmosphere has on the rest of one's composition, once one has learnt the charm of its sensuous languor and does not wear oneself out in rebellious longing for a north-easterly gale. There are certainly moments in the Tropics when distance lends enchantment to a piercing east wind.

At Palmadulla I went into the rest-house. As usual, one's tiffin was in evidence in the garden. The first course was scraping and clucking under the second course, which was hanging in a cluster above. However, afternoon tea was all that I needed, so I declined the eternal invitation to "chicken curry and

plantain fritters," and in so doing saved the life of an elderly rooster which a coolie was hunting in the vain hope that exercise prior to demise might result in tenderness of the flesh. But as I demanded jam instead of chicken, the old cock was spared for the time being, and strutted off with a purple countenance to reassert his offended dignity by bullying his innocent wives.

As the coach brought us near to Ratnapura we passed some of the natives in the enormous hats which they wear to protect their faces from rain. The dress allowance of several must have been consumed by the millinery effort, judging by the scantiness of the rest of their toilets.

Ratnapura and the night appeared together. The fireflies lighted up and danced in the gathering shadows. The insect orchestra began to hum and buzz and boom. Spreading ingersamen trees folded the dainty leaves which they always tuck up in the evening. In the distance the hills looked as unreal as painted stage scenery. Palms stood out dark against the paling sunset, and fleecy clouds overhead scurried over the face of the moon. Hidden among the trees was my destination—the Residency. Stretched on a long chair on one of its pleasant verandahs I once more felt myself "Government punya," as the Malays would say.

I was the last but not the first of my family to be known in Ratnapura; so next day I held a little reception, and was introduced to old residents. A Ratemahatmaya and his wife were among the principal callers. They were attended by an interpreter, who translated their remarks into flowery compliments. The Ratemahatmaya's appearance was not as imposing as it would have been at an official func-

tion, when fold after fold of "comboy" swathed tightly round his person would have lent him a corpulent dignity. At this friendly call he looked too small for the length of his title; neither did the latter seem quite in keeping with a black billycock perched on top of his feminine coiffure, nor the pair of check trousers that made themselves evident below his striped "comboy."

His wife was a very beaming little lady. Like other Singhalese women, she showed by her expression that the fair sex have never allowed themselves to be too down-trodden in Ceylon. Queens and princesses played important parts throughout Singhalese history, and the women were never "purdah nashim" (curtain hidden) like the ladies of India.

A Ratemahatmaya is a very high dignitary. Other native officials are the Mudaliyars and Arachchis, and many more whose positions cannot be more stupendous than their names.

Ratnapura was a green luxuriant place where trees and ferns and creepers ran riot; even the minerals expressed themselves as jewels in the "City of Gems." One of its chief adornments was the "Kalu Ganga" (black river), with bamboos fringing its banks. It formed a waterway to Kalutara, and processions of flat-bottomed boats disturbed the reflections of the bamboos, which appeared, like Narcissus, to have fallen in love with their own dainty selves.

The Residency, like most Ceylon bungalows, was built on the ground instead of being raised on supports, after the Malayan plan. In consequence there was plenty of opportunity to turn amateur naturalist. It was more than probable that one would find scorpions sitting under the flower-pots, or centipedes ready to stroll in to pay a call just when one was barefooted

and prepared to empty a chatty of water over one's head—the customary method of taking a bath. The tub of water from which one filled the chatty was replenished every day by a coolie, but was very likely to turn into an aquarium unless he was careful to empty out its contents from time to time. Then there were all sorts of harmless insects, such as millepedes, with whom one might just as well be friendly, as their society was unavoidable. It looked alarming to see the rat-snakes twisted in the rafters, but the natives never dreamed of killing them; for all they could tell they might be their own grandfathers, as they could have no idea where the souls of those worthies had gone. Besides, every now and then an uproar in the ceiling demonstrated the usefulness of the rat-snakes in demolishing rats. Once a musk-rat had established himself honorary perfumer in a household one's sympathy with rodents was almost certain to decrease.

One day a kabragoya came to visit the hens. I mentioned that I had seen a creature like a small crocodile go into the fowl-house, and the kabragoya must have wished that I had studied the maxim as to silence being golden, for a gun was immediately produced and he received several wounds; but he walked off in the most unconcerned way, even after the top of his head had been shot off. One could not sorrow, as the hens were rejoicing, and a creature cannot suffer much after he has dropped his brains on to the garden path.

The "Perahara" took place while I was at Ratnapura. Kandy would have been the best place in which to see this celebration, but similar ceremonies took place near Ratnapura, at some temples a short way from the town.

We drove out in a hackery—a miniature bullock-

cart. The large bullock-cart is called a bandy, and is drawn by two animals at a walk. The smaller cart, or hackery, has only one steed, which is forced to trot as fast as it can, the contrast being pitiful between the contemplative eyes and the short scuttling legs. When longing to browse in quiet pastures it must be most disturbing to be made to hammer along the hard high-road. When hoping to chew the cud in philosophic contemplation it must be galling to find a string put through the nose. Singhalese are considered most expert bullock-drivers. They get most pace out of an animal because they are adepts at pinching and tickling and prodding its unfortunate back, to say nothing of twisting the sensitive tail till the end of it often snaps off. The Singhalese as a race seem very callous to suffering, and this uncomplimentary opinion is confirmed by their history. Some of their rulers were disposed of by blood-curdling methods. Their love-charms and magic potions, besides being disgusting concoctions, in many cases entailed horrible torture to harmless creatures in order to complete the efficacy of the spells. Observation of Singhalese driving did not tend to revive any belief in Singhalese tenderness of heart. If a bullock could choose his own driver he would undoubtedly prefer a Tamil, while his supreme good fortune would be to fall into Chinese hands.

There were other more official, ostentatious ways of reaching the "dewale" (temple), but I petitioned for a hackery as being so appropriately Singhalese. I rather regretted my choice a few minutes after starting, for the charioteer was so obtrusive that he monopolised all one's thoughts. He looked very spruce in his white "comboy" and his white linen jacket, with a tortoiseshell comb bracing up his well-

greased hair. "Dah! Dah!" he shouted, as he flourished his stick and seized the bullock by the tail.

I felt compelled to describe the law in force in the Malay Peninsula, by which tail-twisting is disallowed, though that was not the least the turn I wanted the conversation to take. I had all sorts of questions to ask, for though the name "Perahara" had been familiar to me as long as I could remember, I had only vague notions as to the origin and meaning of the festival. So, as I noticed the plump prosperity and the leisurely waddle of that particular bullock, I resigned him to his driver.

"What is the Perahara?" I asked.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RATNAPURA, COLOMBO, GALLE.

"THE Perahara," said the Government Agent, "is a procession which dates from prehistoric times. It's believed to have been originally held in commemoration of the birth of Vischnu in his character of Krishna, the Sun God. It is also said to be a festival of thanksgiving for lands granted by the Kandyan kings, and that the kings allowed a religious aspect to be given to it to please their Hindu wives."

"But I thought the shrine of Buddha's tooth was carried in the procession at Kandy?"

"So it has been since 1775. Some Siamese priests were invited to Ceylon by King Kirti Sri. They were shocked to find that the Perahara was entirely in honour of Hindu gods. The king solved the difficulty by ordering the shrine of Buddha's tooth to be carried in the procession,—only the shrine, you know. The tooth itself is too precious to be taken from the dagoba. It's supposed to be a miraculous representation of the original tooth, which the Portuguese burnt at Goa."

"Dah! Dah!" shouted the driver, thumping the bullock as we passed a long line of bandies crawling to the Perahara, and the air grew heavy with the scent of orange blossom and plumiera, the temple

flower. We came to some palm-leaf huts which had been run up for the occasion, to combine the worship of Mammon with the honour done to Vischnu and Buddha. Half-naked salesmen had spread their wares—sweetmeats and fruit and flowers. Quite naked children ran out to stare as our hackery stopped beside the “pandals”—decorative arches most gracefully shaped out of slight bamboos, with areca-nut stems for columns. The fragile framework was hidden by feathery grasses and split palm leaves, while ivory plumes from the blossoming palms quivered above clusters of nuts and gilt oranges and pines, and trails of flowers and ferns wreathed a structure that might have led to a fairy palace.

The Government Agent was used to such displays on his own account, for he was the ruler of a province with functions much the same as those of a Resident in the Malay Peninsula. When he went on his official tours, he was accustomed to be received in state—the cynosure of the natives.

“I always wish,” he said, “that I could transport a pandal bodily to England. Wouldn't it give the Londoner a shock to compare it with his own ideas of decoration? It doesn't seem right that I should be honoured by anything so beautiful while my sovereign is treated to nothing better than bunting.”

In defence of the Londoner, I objected that he did not possess the same ingredients.

“That's true; but he hasn't the fingers either.”

I thought of slim, supple hands writhing in the devil-dance, and agreed it was only natural that Singhalese handiwork should be artistic.

On this occasion the pandals were in honour of the Perahara, and not in honour of the Government Agent. We passed under them to the temples—a

Buddhist "vihara," with a Hindu "dewale" close beside it. One of them had been a Portuguese fort, and its chief item of interest was a fresco on the wall, which depicted a Portuguese knight killing a "Bandhara" who had slain a number of his countrymen.

We climbed to the top of the Hindu temple and had a view of the river and trees, which were not what we had come to look at ; but a white-garmented Hindu priest politely but firmly declined to let us inspect the object of our ascent—the venerated bow and arrows supposed to have been placed there by Rama. Rama, a prince of Oude, is believed to have been Vischnu in one of his many incarnations. He came to Lanka (Ceylon) to rescue his wife, Sita, from Ravana, the demon king of the island, and his weapons were evidently the bow and arrows now kept in a place of safety at the top of that Hindu temple. They would be brought out to take part in the procession, but no persuasions could obtain us a private view. So, by way of covering our repulse with dignity, we pretended that the scenery was all that we cared to see ; and after admiring it, descended to one of the huts, and feasted on cocoa-nut oil-cakes and jaggery, a brown sweet, rather like maple sugar, made from the toddy, or sap, of the palmyra palm.

Our host was the Disawa, a kind-faced, benevolent old man, who ranks highest of all Singhalese dignitaries. Before he had half satisfied his instincts of hospitality the tom-toms struck up with terrific noise, and horns and pipes squealed shrilly to announce the arrival of the devil-dancers. They were hideous in grinning masks, which represented every imaginable malady. The demons of fever, ague, small-pox,

cholera, writhed and twisted and contorted themselves, while patriarchal elephants flapped their ears and curled their trunks in lofty disregard of the demoniac antics.

Presently a procession passed down the temple steps. The men were in white, and wore cloth chin-straps and red bands round their waists as outward and visible tokens of inward and spiritual purity. Four of them carried a palanquin, in which was nothing less than the sacred ark containing the bow and arrows. The procession passed over white cloths, and then the men and the palanquin were mounted up on the elephants. The men sat straddle-legged, and held umbrellas over the relics; while one after another the elephants moved solemn and slow in a stately march round the temples. Torches were lighted, as it had grown dark, and the tom-tom beaters went mad,—at least that was the only charitable construction which could be put upon their musical efforts. The Government Agent nearly broke a blood-vessel trying to make us hear that it was time to go back to the Residency.

This was only one of many noisy evenings, for the Perahara lasted a week and included all sorts of ceremonies. One wondered what filled the minds of the gaping multitudes. Was Brahma, the Creator, so high above their reach that they were left to tremble before Siva, the Destroyer, and rest their hopes on Vischnu, the Preserver? But most of them were Buddhists, with Nirvana as their goal—that eternal peace to follow at last, when, purged of all desire, the errant spirit may cease its round of transmigration. But could any one ponder upon Nirvana while tom-toms were beaten and the devils danced? There was nothing emblematic of any sort of peace

in the ceremonials of the Perahara. Yet Prince Siddartha left a palace home, and braved opposition and insult to bring rest to doubting souls and freedom from degrading idolatry. He was a light to lighten the world, until about six centuries later *the* Light rose at Bethlehem, and showed how Nirvana—the Kingdom of Heaven within the heart—is only to be gained by union with an all-loving Creator Father. Buddha showed how salvation must be worked out alone. Christ leaves to His followers the promise of divine support and personal relationship with the Eternal.

The Buddhist priests take no part in the Perahara, as it is really a Hindu festival; but we passed one on the road as we returned to Ratnapura. In his yellow robes, with his shaven head and his palm-leaf fan, he might have been Mahindo, the royal missionary who was sent from India by his father, King Asoka, in 307 B.C. to proselytise the people of Ceylon. As the moonlight fell on the priest we noticed that he stood under a mango tree, just as if he were really Mahindo. In the Mahawanso it is recorded that the princely priest, when he reached the island, sat himself down on a slab under a mango tree to deliver his expositions upon Buddha, the Enlightened One, upon Dharma, the Buddha's Law, and upon Sangha, the Communion of the Faithful. King Tissa, his queen Anula, and his subjects, all became converts; and Mahindo's sister, the Abbess Sanghamitta, was sent to Ceylon by her father, King Asoka, with a branch of the pipal, or sacred bo-tree, under which Buddha was believed to have attained to his Enlightenment. So the Singhalese embraced the faith which, though driven from India, where it had its origin, has spread over eastern Asia, and still numbers more adherents than any other creed, in spite of the superstitions

and ceremonials that do so much to destroy the life-giving force of all religions.

As our bullock waddled past the priest we looked back and beyond his yellow robes, back beyond the mango tree, we still saw the flicker of torches. Above the tom-toms rose a cry "Saadu," and around us all the sounds of the tropical night seemed uplifted in the "Holy ! holy ! holy !"

When I left Ratnapura I again travelled by coach. This time I took the precaution of sitting at the back, though it was unnecessary, as far as the horses were concerned, for they all behaved perfectly. We were on the Colombo road, and so the coach was probably not made so much use of as a means of breaking in untrained animals.

For some way I had it to myself, and was able to gaze at the scenery without interruption. The villages were full of interest ; the thatched huts were always picturesque, and the brisk little women and the women-like men bought and sold with true Singhalese vivacity. Babies straddled on their mothers' hips ; boys and girls, dressed in nothing but their skins, stared at the coach as it grazed by pariah dogs which seemed to do their utmost to commit suicide under it. Belaboured bullocks were always hard at work trotting between the shafts of hackeries, or slowly dragging heavy carts with thatched palm-tops, with a look of helpless impotence in their eyes as the drivers twisted their tails to accelerate their movements. We passed one or two elephants condescending to share in the day's toil in a stately, leisurely fashion, suitable to creatures probably centenarians. Here and there Tamil coolies mended the highway, singing a sort of song to the rhythm of which they slowly pounded the gravel. As we went through some jungle a wild

boar dashed across the road. White padi birds stalked on long legs through the rice-fields, and mango birds, with yellow breasts, looked like splashes of concentrated sunshine.

At Avisawella some Burghers joined the coach. Strictly speaking, the name should only apply to the descendants of the Dutch colonists, but the term is used more or less indiscriminately for the descendants of the Portuguese and for all half-castes in the island, most of whom are black-haired and dark-skinned, though a few are fair, with flaxen hair to prove the reality of their Dutch ancestry. They are generally very vivacious and talkative; indeed, those particular ones on that particular coach did not allow a moment's breathing-space in their incessant flow of conversation.

The coach took me straight to my destination in Colombo, thanks to my being "Government punya" still, owing to my new host's official status in the Government. His bungalow had every prospect that pleased in a way appropriate to the island. Stephanotis and wax flowers clambered over the verandahs. Maidenheads sprang out of cracks and crannies in the walls, bordered by luxuriant gold and silver ferns. The mere names of all that grew in the garden—oleanders, pomegranates, eucharis lilies, gardenias, thunbergia, bougainvillea, poinsettia—were feasts of sound, as the plants themselves were feasts of colour and perfume. And when day faded and night time came, round moon-flowers unfolded their white petals and stared skywards at the bright namesake whose silver radiance shimmered like a halo across the garden.

But it was race week in Colombo, and that meant hard work—race meetings, horse shows, dances, illum-

inations at Prince's Club, and fish tiffins at Mount Lavinia, to say nothing of the regulation drives to Galle Face, past Colombo Lake and Slave Island, where the labourers of the Cinnamon Gardens were made to live in the days of the Dutch administration.

Galle Face was the orthodox finale to the evening drive. The Governor's wife and everybody else passed up and down in procession, and the sea breezes ruined the finery just fresh out from England. Only nowadays everybody does not know everybody else, as they did in the time when Vereker Hamilton drew his illustrations of the Galle Face gatherings. Then Ceylon society was like a happy family living far away from the rest of the world. Now the rest of the world pours continually into the island. Globe-trotters rush through, and visitors come for a few months or even weeks. So numbers of people on Galle Face now stare askance at each other, as Colombo is not yet large enough to obviate the whole necessity of looking.

The rickshaw drives home in the cool of the small hours were delightful finales to the dances, though the "spicy breezes" by the native huts were not by any means always desirable. But the cocoa-nut trees stood out dark against an illumined sky and moonlight glorified the water. The waves rolled landward with gleaming crests, and sang a song of the eastern night as they crashed below the palms. Like all eastern toilers they sang as they worked, and as an echo came the low crunch of the under tow as it tugged at the coral-reef. They sang their special lesson—a psalm of toil unceasing! Backwards and forwards they ebbed and flowed, with the particles of water circling through them like the blood that animates animal machinery. Their sphere was limited. They had not far to travel,

for I looked in the encyclopædia to make sure. A wave did not start from Australia and make its way to the Indian Ocean. Each wave stopped in its appointed place and did its appointed work. Yet there was never monotony; always perpetual variety, only that variety and all the charm and beauty were in the waves themselves. And so they read their parable that throughout Creation it is the inward, not the outward, influences that ennoble daily work.

All the southern coast of Ceylon is bordered by groves of cocoa-nut trees, some upright, some bowed double, and some with a Grecian bend or a round-shouldered stoop. All are most luxuriant, and clothe the shore from Colombo to Galle, where I went next when the race-meeting gaieties had passed into the sphere of memories.

The journey was by train, and was as hot as it was beautiful. All around were the cocoa-nut groves. Now and then came large lagoons, really the mouths of rivers emptying themselves into the sapphire ocean which sparkled in the burning sun. Vegetation covered the sands and pale convolvuli spread carpets at the feet of the cocoa-nut trees.

According to an old legend, it was on this coast that these palms were first discovered. Kushta Raja, a leper king, had a vision in which he saw strange trees growing by the water-side, and Buddha's father appeared before him and told him that these were palms sacred to Buddha, and that if he journeyed a hundred miles to the coast he would find them and be cured of his leprosy after worshipping at the shrine of Buddha at Welligama, and living for three months on the fruit of the trees. The miracle was evidently accomplished, for the king's statue is said to be carved on the rock at Welligama in commemoration of his

gratitude. The commercial enterprise of the Dutch is the prosaic explanation of the miles of cocoa-nut groves. Huts were hidden in the shadows, sometimes built up round tree trunks; and here and there a native climbed a stem with a strip of palm-leaf round his feet to help him in the ascent.

When I reached Galle I was at one of the oldest trading ports in existence. King Solomon, the Emperor Haroun Alraschid, Queen Berenice, and many other notabilities are believed to have known of the place under different names, for it is supposed to have been the "Kalah" of the Arabians, the "Tarshish" mentioned in the Bible, and a general trading place for Arabians, Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Chinese. For years it was the port of call for the mail steamers, and its treacherous little harbour was thronged by men-of-war. Soldiers garrisoned the fort which the Dutch built during their occupation, and military bands played on the crowded esplanade. But the glory has departed, and now Galle snoozes in oblivion, sinking in a slow decline, unique and beautiful even in death.

The town is built on a peninsula, and on three sides the Indian Ocean washes the fortress walls. On the fourth a green esplanade stretches to the cocoa-nut groves that cover the mainland. The fort is now principally peopled by Burghers, and the grey buildings look as if they are dreaming of Dutch heroes of bygone days. Under the suriya trees a few Britishers still play tennis, while beyond the courts are the barracks, now quiet and desolate. Encompassing the streets are the green protective ramparts, where the sentry-boxes stand empty, and only the Indian Ocean is left to babble about stress

of existence as the emerald waters lap the foot of the old Dutch fort.

I stayed with an old lady as unique as the home she lived in. She belonged to a past generation, and yet was more modern than the most up-to-date. For years she had worked as a merchant; she had kept her office hours, had managed her clerks and business, had owned her trading vessels, and her captains had scoured the seas. The first thing in the morning I found her arranging the flowers and looking to the ways of her household, none the less like King Solomon's ideal woman because she was a merchant who would ascend an office stool in another half-hour and discuss with a nautical man the profits made upon cargo and the payment of harbour dues. When the decline of Galle drove other traders out of the market this little old lady continued to prosecute business with undaunted energy. And so the commerce done by the Sabeans, by the Egyptians under the Ptolemies, by the Chinese and the Phœnicians, was not allowed to die out altogether at Galle. The East and the West, the past and the present, were kept in touch by this daughter of Empire.

One afternoon she took me to see a Singhalese lady whom I had known when I was a small child. Her father had been a Mudaliyar and had married her to a local dignitary. I could remember the day of the Singhalese wedding, when the flowers shook in the bride's hair as her attendants showered her with perfume. That was said to be an augury of good fortune, so it was cheering all these years after to witness its happy fulfilment and make sure of a superstition that really did come true.

We had some way to drive home along a road where bullock-carts passed in procession, and on one

side the sea waves beat on the sands. At the wells men emptied chatties of water over themselves, being spared any necessity to undress. The thatched huts made picturesque shops, and their contents added to the strange blend of Oriental odours, so obtrusive to an unseasoned nose. Between the long, lank stems of the cocoa-nut trees men moved like gnomes, and children vanished like elves among the shadows. A dense black cloud came sweeping over the palm-tops. It was only a company of crows in a hurry to go to bed. In the harbour a solitary tramp steamer was the sole representative of trade. Over the gateway of the fort a pale new moon gleamed on a sky that was all blue and golden, while the sun dropped towards the horizon a great, glowing fiery ball.

I left the carriage and examined old Dutch tombstones in the Presbyterian church, and then mounted the ramparts with a bundle of letters, for the mail had just arrived. Before opening them I walked past the flagstaff and the lighthouse, and watched the sea turn crimson in the sunset and the grey buildings of the fort grow rosy, as if they were reflecting the scarlet blossoms of the flamboyants that blended their vivid brilliance with occasional dark palm-tops and the less dressy colouring of the suriya trees. Then I sat down on the ramparts and read by the blaze of the sunset—

“Benjamin is ordered to the war in China. Anemone goes with him and will need you, so start for Hong Kong immediately.”

CHAPTER XIX.

FROM COLOMBO *VIA* HONG KONG TO WEI-HAI-WEI.

SUCH abrupt orders were startling, but the reason for them was evident. After being regaled with a choice account of Chinese atrocities Anemone felt she could not let Benjamin travel to the Celestial Empire except under her escort. My company was required, and as the transport would not call at Colombo I was to start at once for China and join it there. I found from further study of my letters that Joseph would be forewarned of my coming, and would meet me either in person or by proxy at Singapore.

I had to bring all my visits to an abrupt conclusion and hurry to Colombo and make preparations to start. Dora seemed convinced that now, really and truly, nothing would remain of me except my ghost,—everybody at that epoch of the Boxer rising looking upon China as a certain tomb for Europeans.

I left Ceylon on the same P. and O. liner which brought me there six months before, consequently the same chair and the same attentions were once more placed at my disposal. The passengers, of course, were all different. They now consisted almost entirely of officers ordered to the war in China. The Navy and the Guards, Cavalry, Engin-

eers, Artillery, Infantry, and Indian Army all had representatives on board.

They seemed rather nervous of me the first morning as I lay on the captain's deck-chair and read a novel with rapt attention. But after tiffin a lady-killer came on deck. The cut of his clothes and the turn of his head at once proclaimed him such, just as the curve of his legs indicated the cavalry. The first time I looked up from my book he took off his hat and asked whether I had noticed the waterspouts. I condescended to look at three columns of clouds which were dodging us on the horizon, and then I mentioned that I could tell him to what branch of the service everybody belonged. Somehow the "mad, married, or Methodist," the "poor, proud, or prejudiced," and all the rest of them are always recognisable. After this conversation every one grew most friendly. The dapper little major had broken the ice—one of the functions of lady-killers on a globe which moves so fast that one has no chance to probe through it at all unless one loses no time.

The profession of arms did not seem to weigh very heavily on these warriors. They did not study tactics nor discourse upon military affairs, except one hot night when even on deck sleep deserted them, and they argued over General Baden-Powell's views upon scouting until the captain sent out to beg them to make less noise. An Intelligence Department book, with "strictly private" stamped inside it, was left about the deck for the promiscuous dissemination of military secrets. Otherwise, army topics were not in vogue. Pillow-fights were more popular, which was hardly to be wondered at, for, after all, most men are nothing more than magnified babies—babies that cry for what they cannot get and do not want it when

they have it—a statement considered by Joseph too illogical to be worth refuting.

There were drawbacks to having so many men on board. There was always such a crowd round the companion-way after dinner, and I was obliged to pace the deck in company, which, of course, was charming, but I should have liked some opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* with the elements. Nowhere is the Oriental endeavour to grasp after the absolute and the infinite so nearly attainable as on the great wilds of ocean, where sea and sky are the only prospect, with the glimmer of those other globes whose exploration may be possible once air-ships can be perfected and the earth's atmosphere carried in them by means of liquified air.

Instead of realising myself to be an infinitesimal atom on a whirling planet rushing no one knows whither through space, my thoughts were kept to the more palpable reality of being a passenger bound for China, with ears to open to masculine confidences. So much has been spoken and written on the subject of Woman, but now that women move about and take notes for themselves they are deciding that there is quite as much subject-matter *for* the discussion of Man. His peculiarities may be more comprehensible, as centuries of domination have given them freer play. It may be easier to divide the genus into regular species, and no doubt the distinguishing characteristic is the love of imparting instruction to the feminine gender, so that all women with a thirst for knowledge cannot discover the species with which it is impossible to get on. In the matter of constancy the genus has, perhaps, been unfairly criticised. Constancy, like so much else, depends upon circumstances. Though

the troubadour may have flirted occasionally while his lady-love spent his absence moaning and groaning at home, it is only fair to remember the provocations of the wandering troubadour; whereas the lady-love probably led a provincial existence, and in its monotony perhaps found even lamentations a change. If constancy depends upon the receptivity of mental impressions, it seems quite as likely to be a masculine as a feminine attribute, with this difference, that a man's constancy is liable to be inadvertently swept away by the flutter of an eyelash, or paralysed by throes of admiration for some pink finger-nail. Consequently, how else can one describe Man except as an overgrown baby? After all, this should be his attraction to the mothers of the race.

To my surprise there was no word from Joseph at either Penang or Singapore. At the latter place I decided to go ashore and consult my acquaintances. I accordingly landed, and found a Chinese rickshaw coolie in the grasp of a Sikh policeman, and as I wanted a rickshaw I ordered the policeman to unloose his prisoner there and then. To my surprise he obeyed, and gazed at me in awestruck amazement, while the coolie grovelled at my feet in an abject way quite unusual to a Chinese.

"The Missie," announced the policeman, "has just set foot in the country and already has acquired the language."

As he chose to make a statement I did not feel called upon to contradict it. It might be convenient to pose as an up-to-date magician, so I stepped into the rickshaw and told the coolie to "jaga baik baik" (take care). None of my friends were expecting me,

nor did they know anything of Joseph, so I returned to the steamer and held a consultation with the captain, the P. and O. agent, and the lady-killer, who all decided that it would be better for me to go on to Hong Kong. I agreed; and after an equatorial night spent behind ports that were battened down on account of coaling, I felt thankful to go on anywhere, even into the China Sea and the prospect of typhoons.

"This is the oily calm that precedes a typhoon," said the lady-killer with apprehension. Not a ripple was to be seen, and the water looked as if it were greased. We were pursuing a typhoon as a matter of fact, but as it only gave us the benefit of the calm we had nothing to grumble at.

There was a cloudy sky when we reached our destination. Hong Kong was looking pale. Like many pretty women her appearance depends a good deal upon her colouring. But variable looks add fascination to places and people. It is much more interesting never to be quite certain of what one may expect.

We flocked ashore and watched polo. The square-backed China ponies were more ungainly than ever by contrast with the rocking-horse Arabs, on which a war-bound Maharaja and his followers were taking part in the game.

When my fellow-travellers returned to their steamer, and I found myself alone at the hotel, I suddenly became oppressed by the heat and noise of Hong Kong. The Government had just forbidden a Chinese procession for fear it might cause a riot. The people were angry about it, and the sampans had all been seen to go the same way, which was a very bad sign, it was said. I was told

that there might even be a rising that night, but I was so tired that I did not mind in the least who rose, provided I did not. In the end nothing happened, partly, perhaps, because it rained, and, with the exception of the Dowager-Empress, the inhabitants of China dislike nothing so much as getting wet.

My friends at the Peak invited me to stay with them, but I naturally imagined that a transport carrying troops to the front would be in a tremendous hurry, and that I should be left behind unless I was ready to embark the moment the vessel arrived. Consequently I felt bound to remain at the Hong Kong Hotel, where some of the inmates, particularly the Maharaja, seemed to be very interested in wondering who I was. A Chinese tailor was so touched by my loneliness that he followed me into my room and insisted on taking my measurements, though I protested that I had no money to spare for clothes. I need only pay for the material, he assured me,—any work entailed would be a pleasure; and so, for the equivalent of about £1, 10s., I had a charming little tussor silk costume that might have come from a Paris shop. And yet the Chinese are described as unsympathetic. Would an English tradesman have disregarded his profits simply because he knew how much better a young woman could support trials if ready equipped for them in a pretty new frock?

A day or two after I reached Hong Kong Count von Waldersee arrived to command the allied forces. The goat of the Welch Fusiliers gave him a most rude reception, and came within an ace of butting him off the bund. The streets were filled with baggy-breeched Zouaves and Germans in bil-

ious khaki. It was reported that the French and Russians had decided to take Hong Kong within the year. Several of the residents had gone north on looting purposes; otherwise Hong Kong society went its placid way, and bathing was the order of each afternoon.

At last one morning I awakened to the knowledge that the transport had entered the harbour. I got up, dressed in a hurry, and had just finished when a knock came at my door.

"Is that you, Benjamin? Come in," I cried.

The door opened and in walked Joseph.

Joseph and I always get on well, because we lose our tempers alternately and never at the same time, so that our disputes are too lop-sided to flourish. On this occasion Joseph looked provokingly bland, and my annoyance had its innings. For one thing, I was so surprised to see him that I had no time for self-control.

"I suppose you've come a special trip to Hong Kong to apologise?" I suggested.

Joseph scouted the idea, and wanted to know why I had not waited for him at Singapore. That was so like him. He certainly gave me credit for a good deal of intelligence, as he expected me to know his movements without telling me anything at all. He explained that he was so busy getting to Singapore that it left him no time to make a statement on the subject, and that the most natural thing for me would have been to have waited on the chance.

"On the chance!" I interrupted. "It certainly would have been on the chance,"—and I gently reminded Joseph of some of my Malay travels. However, the main thing was to find out what he was doing in Hong Kong. He explained that he had

considerately taken leave so that we might make up a family party, and, as a secondary reason, with a view to seeing Japan. By degrees I discovered that visitors to Japan were also interesting him. So many Americans went there, he understood; I had said so much about the charm of American women; his household had seemed rather dull since I left. Altogether, I began to grow nervous: if Joseph went wife-hunting I felt sure it would involve me in great responsibilities. Fortunately, for the time being, there were plenty of others to share them. Not only were Benjamin and Anemone on board the transport, but one of Anemone's brothers was there too on his way to join the China Field Force, and another of her brothers was somewhere in the same latitudes as midshipman on board a battleship. The captain of the transport suggested that we should have to charter the China Sea for private navigation if our family connections continued to increase.

Race meetings and subsequent travels had overworked my mended member considerably, and I had to be carried on board on a long chair, to the intense amusement of the China boys and the satisfaction of the hotel inmates, who now felt sure of my identity, and described me to the Maharaja as a wounded refugee from Tientsin.

To my surprise the steamer did not leave port for some time. The troops on board had originally been intended for the relief of the Peking Legations, consequently the military authorities had chartered the slowest vessel discoverable to carry them, regardless of the fact that she would also have to wait to unload cargo at every port. Needless to say, the Legations had been relieved without the

help of anybody on board; and still the poor old vessel lingered in Hong Kong harbour, with the donkey-engine deafening us night and day.

It was just the same in Shanghai. Indeed, we grew so accustomed to being in port that we almost forgot we should ever need to go on; and Benjamin, Anemone, and I were lunching on board a British cruiser when suddenly we heard the old transport whistling for us in an agonised way. At her rate of speed it did not seem to matter much whether she started without us, as we thought a boat-load of bluejackets could chase her with the utmost success. However, Benjamin would not let us risk it, so we clambered on board as the anchor was weighed, and the vessel steamed seaward, with the warships of all nations to our port and starboard all the way. It was a review of the fleets of the world, and we grew to know their national idiosyncrasies. Elongated funnels were the distinguishing characteristics of most of the American boats. From most of the French ones trousers fluttered like pennants: the men-of-war did the duty of suburban back-yards and enjoyed a drying-day. We recognised the Japanese as looking most like our own vessels; while in contrast to them were the Chinese war-junks, with ornamented sterns, large eyes in the bows, and guns popped about on strange little decks where children made themselves evident.

Joseph left us at Shanghai and went straight to Japan; but as I was commissioned to attend upon Anemone, I had to decline his suggestion that I should accompany him.

The transport left Shanghai on the 1st of October, and as we went north the atmosphere more and more filled us with the joy of life. The air was

properly iced; the sunshine warmed sufficiently. The sea joined in our exhilaration, and great waves romped in our wake. On our beam rose the gaunt hills of China,—a distinct purple outline,—with the blue sky above them and the blue waters below. Had our dearest friends turned against us I doubt whether it would have distressed us just then. Worry felt blotted from the universe; mere existence was a delight. Even the soldiers left off singing

“ Why did I leave my little back room
In Bloomsbury ? ”

which had been their melancholy refrain up till then.

After rounding the Shantung promontory we steered west for Wei-hai-Wei. As the interminable journey was really ending the men were made to parade in full service kit. They looked rather like yellow beetles; while the officers were hung over with so many campaigning requisites that Anemone mistook Benjamin for a Christmas-tree.

Early in the morning we entered Wei-hai-Wei harbour. The sky was saffron-coloured and the sea pea-green. North and south stretched the hills, terraced in places for purposes of cultivation, otherwise bare of vegetation except a few patches of scrub. At first we hardly noticed Wei-hai-Wei,—a little walled-in Chinese town on the mainland. The island, Liu-Kung-tau, seemed the all-important place. We looked out on houses which were mostly white-walled and slate-roofed. General Dorward, the British Commissioner, had taken up his residence in the most picturesque building—the Chinese Naval Reception Yamen of former days. Close to the shore stood the white tents of the Hospital Camp.

On the top of Centurion Hill, 500 feet high, there was a glimpse of a fort—for at that time it was intended to fortify the island; and no doubt, if intentions could create fortifications, we should have had an excellent naval base.

Directly the transport had anchored the officers were rowed ashore to report themselves. They returned with the latest intelligence—how the Japanese troops surpassed all the others, and how the Russians said they preferred French women to French soldiers. The opinion of the French in regard to their Allies was to be expressed later on. There was much talk too of the doings of *H.M.S. Pigmy*, the little gunboat which had taken the forts at Shan-hai-kwan. The Russians had hauled down the British flag, and the British captain had wished to address them politely on the subject, but the British general roared, “Up with it again in ten minutes—OR”—and the “or” was so terrible that up went the Union Jack again in that limit of time, and as no war correspondents were present the general public was spared the anxiety of knowing how that for the space of ten minutes the Russian Bear and the British Lion showed their teeth all ready for war.

On the afternoon of our arrival Anemone and I went on shore, and visited several of the ladies quartered on Liu-Kung-tau. Some of them told us they had been reduced to washing in soda-water during the Boxer scare. Anemone only said, “How extravagant,” which I was sure was not an appropriate remark. In the evening we climbed to the top of Centurion Hill, and had a good view over the mainland and the 300 square miles of hills and valleys which at that time formed British territory.

On another of the many days which we spent in

Wei-hai-Wei harbour we paid a visit to the coast. As we were rowed ashore we saw two Chinese sailors leisurely hoisted to the top-mast on the yard-arm of a junk. It was quite a pleasant surprise to find that even seamanship could be undertaken in a comfortable way. New barracks for the Chinese regiment were being built on shore. We saw a British Tommy and a Chinese sergeant drilling a new recruit. The recruit seemed very much interested, which was not to be wondered at, as the sergeant had drilled his own figure into the most marvellous straight-fronted corset effect. His self-complaisance and swagger must have quite startled his countrymen, who have always been accustomed to despise the military. In the past they hardly ranked soldiers above barbers and tailors, who can never aspire to becoming mandarins. That dignity is open to almost all other men in China, though a few more are debarred, such as actors and chiropodists. If the coolie that unloads a vessel could manage to let his son study and pass the examinations, the son would, as one of the "literati," be entitled to hold office as mandarin. It would not follow that he could get an appointment, and, if he did not, his relations would have to support him or leave him to starve, as, having attained through learning the highest grade of Chinese society, he must not demean himself by manual work. Consequently it may be simpler and more profitable to remain a coolie and unload ships. But no learning could assist the ambitions of a barber. His employment is considered derogatory, because he stands while all men sit. In the same way a tailor's erudition would be useless. He is despised because he does women's work. This explanation annoyed Anemone, who is very clever with her needle.

"I should have thought that tailoring proves that

women's work is most important of all," she said. "Think of shop windows in London and Paris. Any one would suppose from those that women make up the world. Just imagine, too, landing in China if nobody knew how to make clothes!"

We were told that the Chinese regiment had grown very popular since the soldiers had discovered that they were paid their wages without even the deduction of "squeeze." Those that went to the front did excellently, and judging by the pains he took over his drill, the new recruit meant to emulate his brothers in arms. It seems sad to think the parades were to end so soon, and that the straight-fronted sergeant can no longer swagger in uniform.

The natives of Wei-hai-Wei were darker complexioned and had more rugged faces than the plump Cantonese. We wandered past some of their houses, and were depressed by seeing a number of caged larks. I observed that I thought anything so unnatural as the caging of winged creatures should be put a stop to by international law. Not only were the *prime donne* imprisoned, but we came upon a 'cellist in durance vile. We found a cricket in a tiny cage, still conscientiously rubbing his wings together and so producing the ceaseless chirrup that makes the summer music of sunny lands. Indeed he seemed so intent on his playing that Anemone thought he scorned captivity, and that he might just as well practise behind bars as anywhere else. As Chinese often take their caged birds out for walks to give them air and sunshine, they certainly have not so much to complain of as feathered captives in other lands.

We thought we had really seen the last of the troops, but that day, when we returned on board, there they were just the same as when we had left

them. In fact there seemed no particular probability that they would ever leave, although the Admiralty would have to pay £100 a day for the further detention of the vessel. Benjamin thought it a pity no Radical M.P. was with us, for he would have found it so exhilarating to have at last discovered an accurate reason for the increase in the national expenditure. After two years of British occupation there were no facilities for trans-shipping at Wei-hai-Wei. The blue-jackets helped to take off the great timber planks which we had brought up for the construction of the new pier; and they also removed sixty Ordnance Sikhs who otherwise seemed doomed to remain on the transport for life. We watched them squeezed into the boat like tinned anchovies, while the sailors tossed oars in the vain hope of making room. Somehow they succeeded in taking them off, but still the British Tommies remained. However, next day a lighter was brought alongside for their removal, but the ardour with which they received it was a little damped by hearing that it had a tendency to sink. Indeed the last rat was seen to leave it and hurry on board the transport.

There was another long pause after the arrival of the lighter, while the dredger was alternately commanded, threatened, and implored to come to the rescue and tow it away. Wei-hai bay could not be of much use as a harbour until the deep-water area was increased, so the great dredger had been brought there for that purpose, but certainly since the arrival of troops she had not had a moment to see about mud. She was the general servant—the overworked “slavey”—of the harbour; and we used to hear her being whistled for in opposite directions in the most bewildering way. Long afterwards, when Anemone

and I heard that the Government had abandoned all idea of making Wei-hai-Wei a naval base, we both heaved sighs of relief in spite of patriotic regrets. We could not help thinking of the dredger and her well-earned repose. We wonder does she recline on the shore by the little walled city and dream of the mud kept waiting while she answered the frantic summons of vessels in Wei-hai bay? We could hardly believe our eyes when she at last towed the troops away on the lighter. Benjamin was to remain till the last moment, as the captain had promised him the use of his gig. The soldiers boarded the other transport in safety, but the dredger had no time to bring the lighter back. Two little tugs undertook the task, and brought it round our transport with so much way on that it broke loose, and the tide washed it back to its starting-place. Then the tugs adopted different tactics, and towed the lighter so slowly that it remained for an hour fast stuck under our stern. At last it lay alongside, and the horses were slung on to it. This had just been done when it was discovered that no order for trans-shipping the horses had been received as yet. There was consternation on board. It was almost decided to bring the horses back again. However, they were left where they were on the lighter, with a syce squatting at each animal's nose.

Presently a message came from the other transport that she might manage to sail that night if the horses were trans-shipped at once. The general tore his hair, and altogether rumbled his charming, benign appearance. "Oh dear! dear! dear! Oh la! la! la! This is a show! This is a show! We'll be stuck for ever in Wee-hee-Wee" (as he insisted upon pronouncing it). "Now, if I were the colonel of a cavalry regi-

ment, I'd have those horses on board the other boat in ten minutes."

As the dredger was at the other end of the bay Anemone and I felt doubtful about it. It was also a puzzle to our unsophisticated minds why a cavalry colonel should be allowed greater responsibility than a general.

"Used you not to think," Anemone asked me, "that men were marvels to be able to conduct campaigns and manage transport and commissariat and all the rest of it?"

"I used to think so," I said.

"But do you think so now?" she persisted, while a bored horse on the lighter neighed.

"Well!" I said faintly, "when one is in the midst of it—it—it really seems quite simple—chiefly confusion—one—one almost feels——"

Anemone finished the sentence in a whisper, "One feels one could do it oneself."

Then we walked to opposite sides of the deck in a state of depression, for this was not a topic on which we wished to agree. Nothing is so conducive to melancholy in a woman as having to lower her ideal of masculine all-sufficiency in even the minutest degree. However, we took comfort in accepting the captain's invitation to go for a row in his gig.

It was night-time now, and a light breeze ruffled the indigo waters. Lights twinkled from the steamers and from the island, and H.M.S. *Terrible* loomed distinct in the starlight as guardian of the bay. When we rowed back to our vessel we found the same forlorn company on board the lighter, only a little fire now burned in front of each horse's nose. Over each fire crouched a shivering bundle in a blanket. Every now and then the animals kicked

each other, whereupon the bundles unwrapped themselves and emitted a volley of raucous grunts.

It was the afternoon of the next day before the correct orders were received and the dredger was available. When the horses were towed away Benjamin said good-bye for the last time. Soon after his transport slipped away to Taku ; ours—a transport no longer, but merely an intermediate steamer—steamed east and south for Japan. The sunset crimsoned the waters, and our thoughts were filled with “wars and rumours of wars.” Would the blood of the nations of Europe ever stain that sea the same gory colour? “Who knows?” we said to each other. “Perhaps Europe won’t have much say in the matter. It’s the Yellow Sea, and the people on its coasts are yellow ; perhaps they’ll keep its history yellow as well.”

We did not guess that our words were likely to be prophetic. Anemone only knew that she felt sea-sick, which I thought remarkable, considering she had lived on board for over two months.

“Benjamin was here before,” she reminded me.

I acknowledged that this was a lucid explanation. Health is always so dependent upon company. Under the circumstances, Anemone continued sea-sick until we sighted Japan.

CHAPTER XX.

JAPAN.

EARLY one morning I opened startled eyes to behold a small Japanese head bobbing up and down in my cabin doorway. I understood that this was the modernised form of the ancient, lengthy, doubled-over Japanese bow, but that did not seem to make its intrusion into my cabin any more allowable. In any case, my recumbent position on a bunk necessitated my returning the salutation very stiffly. But my acknowledgment, such as it was, seemed to satisfy the head, which promptly vanished through the curtains, and Mrs Trout, the stewardess, appeared in its place to tell me that Nagasaki was reached and that I had been medically examined.

After we had dressed Anemone and I spent an hour taking snapshots through the port-holes for no other reason that we could make out than that promiscuous photography was forbidden at Nagasaki. We had bought a kodak in Shanghai, but, fortunately, we did not take it ashore, for as we landed we had an object-lesson in what it means to break Japanese regulations. A German from another steamer stepped out of a boat with a camera. A small Japanese relieved him of it with the utmost politeness, and then smashed it into atoms, all the while smiling

benevolently. Any one might have fancied that the Japanese official really imagined that the German had brought the camera ashore for the purpose of getting some one to break it. "No trouble at all. Don't mention it," he appeared to assure the irate Teuton, as Anemone and I, growing nervous, ordered our rickshaw coolies to take us to Moji.

It is sad to relate that the smells of Japan were what first impressed Anemone. As she rickshawed through Moji with her handkerchief to her nose, I advised her to find consolation in reflecting that she was indulging in antiques which, owing to the Chair of Sanitary Engineering, would soon be debarred to all modern nostrils.

The weather was still warm in southerly Kiushiu, and the natives were able to be economical with their clothes. This was also a trial to Anemone. It seemed an anomaly, she thought, in a nation so enthusiastic about adopting top-hats and frock-coats.

We spent several days in port owing to cargo, and grew to know something of Nagasaki. We pictured the Portuguese when they had jurisdiction there in the sixteenth century, and before our minds' eyes the Buddhist temples were once more pulled down, and Christian churches built on their sites, for the Nagasaki of those days had adopted the teaching of the Jesuit missionaries, and Christians were numbered by thousands all over Japan. Then, as we thought of the awful persecutions that followed, we shuddered as we explored streets of quaint little buildings, where smiling inhabitants looked as if they only played at keeping shop. Yet it was through such houses that the Inquisitors had gone on their blood-curdling errands, causing the inmates to trample the Cross under foot, or else suffer the most excruciating tor-

tures before laying down their lives. At Nagasaki, while all the rest of Japan was sealed up to the world, for two and a half centuries the Dutch were allowed a settlement for purposes of trade. And round Nagasaki the Christian faith was secretly transmitted from generation to generation, until, in 1865, it was discovered that Christians were still numbered by thousands in the villages of Kiushiu.

The only religious ceremonies which Anemone and I witnessed seemed so festive that we were just going to offer our felicitations when somebody mentioned that a funeral was taking place. Any one wanting lively obsequies should certainly arrange to die in Japan. Anemone and I nearly did so, though under circumstances which would have prevented any one from honouring us with mourning rites. Our demise nearly came to pass in this way. We left Nagasaki one lovely evening. There was a curious mirage across the waters, which made the clouds look like islands and the islands like clouds. Even scenery seems to have fits of pretending to be something a little different from what it really is. At daybreak next morning Mrs Trout appeared in my cabin.

"The Straits of Shimonoseki. The captain's compliments," she announced, as though she were introducing the Straits to the compliments.

I put my winter coat over my kimono and woke up Anemone. But she scorned both Shimonoseki and the captain's message, though I reminded her of the historical importance of the first.

"Don't you remember it was here the Taira war-junks were defeated by the *Minamoto*? It was Shimonoseki, too, that the Treaty Powers bombarded——"

But Anemone gave me clearly to understand that

only through the port-holes would she study recollections of the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century. So I went up on deck, with Mrs Trout as my chaperon. It was a foggy morning, and at first we could see nothing except a faint outline of cliff. Then, as the sun rose, its beams burst through the greyness, and on the hillsides illuminated the words "Tan San." Shades of the drowned Emperor Antoku and his grandmother—do you ever study the merits of that mineral water, and approve of the advertisements of New Japan?

The mists soon cleared, and gave us a view of a Japanese steamer which was wobbling towards us in the most erratic way. Suddenly we were conscious that our own vessel had stopped. At the same moment the doctor appeared on deck in his pyjamas, and the Japanese steamer shot straight across our bows. I knew that the steamer had no business to be in such close proximity; but just the same might have been said of the pyjamas, and it was their presence that perturbed me most.

"Did you see that? Did you see that?" shouted the fourth officer, rushing past us. "Only a hair's-breadth nearer and we should have been run down."

There were loud imprecations from the bridge of our vessel; and on the bridge of the Japanese steamer the Japanese captain smiled the smile of Japan and bowed. He continued to zigzag towards the "Hong Kong Maru" behind us, and we went on our way, rejoicing that we had escaped being run down by the Japanese.

"We should have been," said the captain at breakfast, "if I hadn't forestalled the arrangement by stopping engines." He went on to explain that

nothing could have saved us had we gone down in the rapid waters of the Straits. As we had made good our escape it was satisfactory to find that the danger had really been thrilling; but it rather spoilt heroics to remember that, had we taken that short passage into the next world, pyjamas would have absorbed my attention *en route*.

All day long we passed between stiff little islands covered with stiff little trees, and stiff-legged birds flew across a greeny-blue sky in the stiff-winged way they fly across screens and kakemonos. Anemone said she would be certain to adopt a stiff little toddle and a stiff little stoop if she remained in the Inland Sea for longer than a day. But while the sun was setting we passed out through the Straits of Kurusima, and the splendour of that evening seemed to blazon all the glories of the Old and New Japan. The west was gold and crimson, and north and south and east the sky was tinted blue and mauve and grey. Across the sea stretched patches of green, like lawns in an English garden; while here and there pools were deep red, like blood stains; and beyond, as far as the shelving shore-line, the waves gleamed with the soft iridescence of a flooring of mother-of-pearl. Then Japan pulled down the grey veil of twilight, and all night long our vessel plodded through darkened waters, till Kobe and the next morning were reached at the same time.

It was almost a shock to find that we were expected to leave the steamer at Kobe. Anemone had lived on board for so long that she had begun to imagine she had taken up her residence there for life. We felt distinctly depressed as we sat on the "hatoba" (landing-stage), and watched the customs' officials examine the twenty-one packages which I had been

counting diligently, while Anemone looked on with an air of superiority because I had eleven possessions while she had only ten. Just as the official had reached the intricacies of my guitar-case and Anemone's sewing-machine, a minute policeman on the roadway suddenly punched the head of a rickshaw coolie, and in so doing relieved our feelings more than his own, for he beamed and smiled the whole time. He was not the least annoyed about anything. He simply chastised the coolie because it was for his good. For all we could tell, the man might have erred in one of the five moral Confucian relationships, or sinned against the spirit of Bushido, for the policeman was probably a descendant of the Samurai, and felt it his duty to inculcate the "Military Knight Ways." In any case we felt the coolie's behaviour was likely to be exemplary after his punishment, so we engaged him to take us to the hotel.

We thought of making our headquarters at Kobe, where we almost expected to find Joseph; but he had gone on to Kyoto and Nikko, after having indulged his Irish love of a "shindy" by appearing in the law courts. He had disagreed, it seemed, with the charges made by a rickshaw coolie.

"Never mind. Pay what he asks," said the cautious British residents. "A coolie will prosecute you as soon as look at you since the doing away of the Treaty Ports."

Joseph forestalled being prosecuted by having the coolie arrested. The case was tried, and given in Joseph's favour, and he departed supremely contented at having probed Japanese equity to its very roots.

Anemone and I found several drawbacks to remaining at Kobe. To begin with, the hotel charges were high. To continue, a volley of stones was sent one

day through the window at tiffin time. It was carefully explained that the sentiment they carried was anti-German, that the alarming attention was only intended for the Teutonic proprietor of the hotel. Apparently German innkeepers and waiters were not to be allowed to make "ubique" their motto throughout Japan. All the same, Anemone did not think the explanation gave any better flavour to broken glass served with the vegetables, although the Japanese waiter unfolded his history by way of diverting our attention, and it was a sufficiently remarkable life-story to be able to do that.

He had served in the United States navy and then on Japanese transports. He was at Port Arthur when it was first captured from the Chinese, and he then went to China as a spy. We inquired what disguise he wore. "English missionary," he answered, as though that were the most natural and appropriate. We were not so surprised in future when we heard that the Celestials considered that the missionaries' doctrines were sometimes very mixed and strange. The Chinese once suspected him, but his life was saved by his being able to show English letters tatooed on his chest. But he had to stand by and see a compatriot carried to the place of execution on bamboos run through his hands and feet.

Anemone and I could bear no more, and were glad to go out and shop. As we walked through the streets a little old man in a grey kimono appeared to follow us. He wandered along in an aimless way, and whenever we looked at him he directed a vacant gaze at the sky. Our minds still ran upon spies, and Anemone at once decided that he was one.

"That settles it," she announced. "He thinks we're here for good. We'll just give him the slip."

And so it came to pass that the next day found us and our twenty-one packages on board a Japanese boat, though Anemone almost changed her mind about going at the last moment, for a little old man in grey kimono gazed seaward as we left the "hatoba."

The Japanese vessel had every modern appliance. She was one of a line which ran between China and Japan. She had all sorts of spacious apartments off her decks, and high-sounding titles announced their purposes. The passengers were mostly Oriental, and left Anemone and me the exclusive use of the "Social Hall." There were a number of rules on board. They were printed in English in all the cabins. I looked through them to see which I should need to break first, and found the surprising disclosure that all lights were put out at nine o'clock. The Japanese evidently believed in beauty-sleep, and we even snatched some extra moments by slumbering after dinner on the hurricane-deck. It was an awful moment when we awoke and saw that it was five minutes to nine. In three hundred seconds we should find ourselves in the dark. We tumbled down the companion, tore off our clothes, and scrambled into our bunks as two bells sounded. When we woke up at three in the morning the electric light was still full on, and the rules stared at us in the face perfectly unabashed. After all, they had been very efficacious as threats. At six the decks were washed down with so much prodigality that we almost had to swim to our baths. However, a little bowing, smiling person in a kimono came to our assistance. We had great difficulty to keep from calling her "geisha" instead of stewardess, for, as Anemone and

I agreed, she must surely have had professional lessons in smiling. Anemone did not believe that by nature any one's spirits could remain perpetually at beaming-point. However, in Japan custom decrees that they should, and gloom and irritability are tabooed as unfashionable.

At Yokohama we received a letter from Joseph. He wrote from Myanoshita and begged us to join him at once. We had no notion how to get there, so we applied to a policeman, who was quite equal to us and our twenty-one packages, and piloted us all to the station.

Instead of resting I had taken vigorous exercise at all the ports, and had even explored the conning-tower and the fighting-tops of a German cruiser at Nagasaki. By the time we reached Yokohama station I could only shuffle along in Japanese sandals with the greatest difficulty. With the wonderful thought and consideration of his nation, a fellow-traveller in a blue kimono came up and offered me his arm, at the same time ordering a red-capped porter to walk behind me and hold up my dress. As we progressed down the platform Anemone seemed intent on rivaling the risible faculties of Japan.

In the carriage with us travelled two Japanese gentlemen, evidently of the old school. They wore grey kimonos, and smoked queer pipes which required a great deal of attention, as after every three whiffs the tobacco needed to be renewed. They studied a Japanese paper, which no doubt was essentially modern, but they shook their heads solemnly over it from time to time. As we sat meekly opposite these old worthies we realised the wonder of the lightning change which has taken place in Japan. Before us were individuals who had been brought up in the

feudal system, and we were able to watch them study the news of the world inside a railway train.

Outside were odd little hills that looked as if they had once been islands, while the valleys were shaped like inlets and bays. The hills were charmingly wooded, and little wooden buildings like dolls' houses peeped here and there through the trees. Then we passed through flat rice-fields with narrow roads running across them, and finally darkness closed in as we reached Kodzu, where we changed to an electric tram. This mode of progression was disappointing. It was so modern and unoriental, but when we were turned out at the village of Yumoto we felt that the methods of the Occident were not to be despised. We were very tired, and our one desire was to reach the end of our journey: instead of seeing much prospect of that, our attention was drawn to a young woman standing in a doorway, apparently practising a breathing exercise. When she took her hands off her knees and undoubled herself we realised that she was inviting us into a tea-house. We made her understand that we did not want tea, but that we wanted appliances for travel, whereupon there were shouts of "kuruma," and two rickshaws were produced. Our twenty-one packages remained scattered over the roadway, and I utterly declined to be moved in person until I had seen my belongings started on their way. We admonished the lady of the tea-house and everybody present that the baggage coolies must go ahead. All the satisfaction we received took the form of more bowing, and an amicable outburst of "Hai! Hai!" We had no vocabulary with us to let us know that "Hai!" was, more or less, an affirmative answer. The only Japanese word we knew was "jinrikisha," and we were not

even certain that that was Japanese, as we had been told that the vehicle was originally invented by an American for use in Japan, where the natives call it "kuruma."

I grew so annoyed at my ignorance of the language, and the general atmosphere of stupidity, that I gave my rickshaw coolie a poke with my parasol. This was the climax. He showed no indignation, but he resolutely stepped from between the shafts and declined any further connection with me.

"Don't you understand now the reason of the successfulness of Japan and the downward road of poor old Ireland?" I inquired of Anemone. "The Japanese know how to keep their tempers; the Irish don't. That's the secret of the whole thing. After all, they've got tempers. Hideyoshi, for instance, lost his when the Emperor of China wanted to make him King of Japan——" But Anemone, who had not my affection for history, said she thought speculation upon national traits was unseasonable, and that I had better apologise to the coolie unless I wanted to sleep at Yumoto that night.

As I spoke no Japanese I was spared the humiliation of a verbal apology, but I had to look penitent, which was quite bad enough. Being in the right the coolie could afford to be forgiving, so he picked up the shafts and we moved on, leaving the baggage untouched on the road. We were too humbled to refer to it again. Our only illumination was one paper lantern which we shared between us, and which might as well have been left behind for all the light it gave. Although the road was uphill the coolies rushed along so precipitately that had they been horses we should have accused them of running away. We were bumped and jolted over ruts and

boulders, we slipped along mountain paths, by the sides of precipices with roaring torrents storming below us, and dark hillsides closing us in like prisons as we scaled higher and higher towards pale stars which blinked down upon us in the most unfeeling way. My incapacitated condition made me feel very nervous. I said my prayers and tried to compose myself to the state of resignation suitable to any one just about to meet her end. Instead, we met a village, and soon after a long flight of steps leading to an hotel. I tottered out of the rickshaw and stared at the steps forlornly. I was not left long to survey them. I was suddenly hoisted off my feet and carried to the top. The small person who deposited me in the doorway smiled and bowed, and when he straightened himself did not reach much above my waist. I do not know whether he understood that blank amazement was what prevented my returning thanks. The baggage had arrived and was patiently waiting for us, and as the only vacant apartments without the drawback of more steps were small rooms in the bachelors' quarters, with those we had to be content.

All next day Joseph and Anemone took walks and sulphur-baths alternately. I could not put my foot to the ground, so I had to stay in bed. I could see nothing from my windows except the bachelors, whom I wished at Jericho, or rather in England, where they might have been of some good. On the third day it rained, and Joseph announced that Myanoshita was a stupid place and that we had better leave at once.

I declined to descend the mountains by rickshaw. I travelled in a chair, regardless of the elements. The rain streamed, and the mist was so thick that the chair-bearers were scarcely visible, much less the

country round. Peeping under my umbrella I managed to catch glimpses of an orchard, a water-mill, a man in a straw costume—the Japanese equivalent for a mackintosh—a river frothing in the valley, and maples very dressy with their gold and crimson autumn tints. But the mist was most efficient in concealing all the beauties. I had no more idea what Myanoshita was like after my visit than I had before going there.

“I couldn’t possibly be succeeding better in how *not* to see Japan,” I told the others, as I rejoined them in Yumoto and lent Anemone hair-pins, as not one of her own was left. The rickshaws had galloped down the mountains. Anemone had not been nervous, because the rate of descent had left no time for feelings. It had left no time for anything, except her hat to come off and her hair to tumble down. Yet, in spite of this extraordinary speed, Joseph seemed very impatient, and tried to help the tram’s progress by pacing up and down.

“Tall, with a small head—looks like an American,” I overheard him mutter.

“Are you referring to the Duchess of Marlborough?” I asked. I had had my suspicions that something more than rain had been accountable for the sudden flitting from Myanoshita, and now Joseph acknowledged that he was in full pursuit of a girl who was, he expected, American, consequently an heiress and most suited to be the future Mrs Joseph March. When he rushed away and left Anemone and me behind at the station in Yokohama I am afraid our comments upon our prospective sister-in-law were more forcible than polite. At such junctures Anemone has a way of dissociating herself from the family.

"I wonder you don't all use the double barrel to your name," she suggested, as she helped me to a rickshaw.

"I didn't know we had one," I answered.

"Why, surely," she retorted, "March is always hyphenated to Hare."

She did not mention the adjective usually applicable, but she might just as well have done so, I thought.

We went to the hotel with the prettiest appellation, and everywhere—on jugs and basins, cups and saucers—we found ourselves confronted by maple-leaves. As I dried my face on a maple-leaf, and then crawled under one to sleep, I made certain that the writer of the national pæan of Canada had paid a visit to that hotel, for certainly it was a case of

"The maple-leaf, the maple-leaf,
The maple-leaf for ever!"

Next morning Joseph found us out and was very anxious to make amends for the previous evening. The American lady had vanished on board a liner, so nothing except a slight depression remained to distract his attention. While he and Anemone went room-hunting I stayed in to be interviewed by a doctor, and was very startled when the hotel manager ushered Dr Nikola into my room. At least, if he was not the original of Mr Guy Boothby's hero he ought to have been, for a more striking likeness could not have been found. When the others returned they found me mournfully confronting a maple-leaf. Dr Nikola had ordained an operation which would necessitate my not putting my foot to the ground for three weeks. Certainly everything was working smoothly towards the success of how not to see Japan.

Fortunately, Joseph was lucky as usual. He has the power of doing exactly what he chooses without any one minding, and getting just what he wants without annoying any one else. This time his good fortune prevailed for our benefit, and he secured the best room at the cheapest rate in one of the hotels overlooking the bund. Before he returned to the Malay States he saw us installed there, and a lively view over the harbour counterbalanced the misfortune of weeks spent in the clutches of Dr Nikola.

One day the Japanese had boat-races. First they set up a pavilion which had "Yokohama Athletic Club" written over it in sprawling letters. Here a great crowd assembled, and all day long a band laboured conscientiously at ancient waltzes, Irish jigs, and Scottish melodies. On the water were barges filled with people waving flags, either green or red or white, while a little boat moored opposite was filled with flags which were left to wave themselves.

The races were between young Japanese cadets from different colleges. There were three boat-loads: one boat was filled with young Japs in green jerseys, one with Japs in white, and one with Japs in red. They looked rather like a flock of parrots, as the boats won in turn in the most ceremonious way. We supposed this had been arranged to satisfy scruples of Japanese courtesy, but we could not make out who could be the winners under such conditions at the close of the day, when the band played "God save the King," or "the Queen," as it still was then, and the spectators dispersed. The Anglo-Japanese alliance had not been formulated then, and "God save the Queen" was evidently not played as a compliment. We came to the conclusion

that the Japanese understood the British National Anthem to be the up-to-date European method of telling people it was time to go home. As a matter of fact, no one had decided upon the winners, and the whites and greens—the cadets from Yokohama and Tokio—had to race again the whole of the following day, and then we were not sure that either boat-load won. In fact, the Japanese are so invincible that apparently they cannot beat themselves.

In spite of such diversions it was trying only to be able to survey Japan through window-panes.

“I’ve always despised a globe-trotter’s standpoint—now I’m left without even that,” I complained to Anemone, as I mournfully contemplated my foot, on which a blind masseuse was performing butterfly movements, most showy and complicated, but so light and feather-like that she might have spared herself the trouble, I thought.

However, we managed to include a great deal of hilarity in the days’ proceedings, and sometimes continued it so far into the night that our next-door neighbour used to thump indignant protests on the wall. Anemone was also busy making friends in the hotel. Like most little, fair women she is thoroughly capable of taking care of herself, especially as she has a rather nervous manner, which makes everybody think her in need of their extreme solicitude. “Dear little Mrs Benjamin March,” people called her, and had not the remotest suspicion that the lynx eyes of the “sweet little woman” were spying out their innermost peculiarities. By the time I re-emerged she had made a great many acquaintances; and we used to give tea-parties, which must have been lucrative for the establishment, as we discovered by chance that our guests used to be presented with

"chits" demanding payment as they went out at the hall door. The most useful of Anemone's new friends was a young man whom we installed as a sort of courier. At least, he advised us what purchases to make and what dresses to put on, and escorted us on our expeditions after I was sound on my feet again, and we started out to see what we could of Japan.

As a thorough change from my rest-cure we began by climbing the Hundred Steps, and at the top were given tea by Oyuchesan, whom we thought decidedly *passée*; but perhaps we did not see the right lady, or even if we did, a great many years have gone by since the American sailor man first sang her praise. What we admired most from the top of the Steps was Fujiyama, the dainty Lady of Japan, with her powdered head and the faint pink glow of the sunset like rouge on a pure, pale face. Unlike all other mountains—so delicate, yet so strong; so shapely, yet scarred by ancient upheavals—she stands out the type of the grace and heroism of the people of those fairy-like islands, where rugged pines overshadow the rice-fields and an apple orchard stands *vis-à-vis* to a bamboo grove—where the East calls to the West, "Come and join hands together. The sun as it rises and sets shines on both in the same short day. Racial distinctions are paltry on such an insignificant globe!"

CHAPTER XXI.

JAPAN.

YOKOHAMA is a place one can understand. The old native quarter, with its queer little houses and its paper-lantern lit streets, remains to remind one of the village that first gained importance from its proximity to Kanagawa, the original treaty port. On Kanagawa Bluff the rich Japanese reside, and on the other Bluff are the villas of well-to-do Europeans. The foreign settlement is near the sea-shore, and at the back of the settlement is Chinatown.

But Tokio seems to rival the complexities of Japanese history, or at least it did so in the days before electric cars were introduced. Its irregular streets look as if they needed sorting and tidying. They spread out in all directions without any method, their one and only apparent object to stretch as far as possible from each other, and send the rickshaws scudding farther and farther like so many round-backed beetles. They are reminiscent, I suppose, of the fishing village of the fifteenth century, called Ye-do, the "door of the bay." The picturesque moat and wall which wind round the middle of Tokio remind one of the feudal days when Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, had Yedo recommended to him for a place of residence by Hideyoshi, the great

soldier of Japan. At Yedo Ieyasu's descendants lived as Shoguns, the virtual rulers of the empire, though the real power soon became vested in the officers round them, and they themselves had no more influence than the emperors who were shut away in sacred seclusion at the Court at Kyoto. Inside the moat and walls red-brick Houses of Parliament testify to the change that was made when Yedo became Tokio, the Eastern capital—the Emperor's new residence; the Shogunate was abolished for ever; the Daimio of their own free will surrendered their feudal privileges, and, by the unparalleled patriotism of the whole nation, Japan entered on her new glorious era of Meiji—"Enlightened Peace."

Anemone decided that we should not take up our residence at Tokio, as it was such an easy journey from Yokohama, but we used often to go there for the day. The joys of shopping were restricted because we had no idea what expenses we might have in the future, and we felt we must save money to be ready for all contingencies. Life was made supportable to Anemone by the hope of joining Benjamin in Peking. This anticipation, though otherwise delightful, involved a carefulness over expenditure that was certainly a drawback when we were supposed to go and shop. Every one was buying curios. As for the Courier, he had a genius for shopping; while Anemone and I, on the contrary, never wanted what we could afford because we so much preferred everything that was beyond our means. So we treated the shops as museums, and went into raptures over cloisonné, lacquer, bronzes, pictures of Princess Oto-Tachibana sitting in the middle of Yedo Bay to quiet the waters, and Yoshitsune, the great hero, performing his exploits in gay embroideries. It was an economical method,

for we used to come out leaving the salesmen no richer and ourselves no poorer than when we went in. When the Courier found himself asked to carry an almost microscopic model of a crab, costing two sen, as the result of a day's shopping, he felt that it was time for him to take our purchases in hand; and, acting under his advice, we managed to have our necessities supplied, in spite of the more desirable works of art which so appealed to us.

We found that there was a good deal of uncertainty about special orders. The Japanese invariably bowed and smiled, no matter whether they intended to do as we wanted or not. This was very confusing after being accustomed to Chinese, who make it so very evident when it is their intention not to oblige, but are absolutely to be relied upon once they have pronounced the magic words "can do." All we could feel certain of with the Japanese was that they would keep their tempers, even if we lost ours, and that was not altogether a consolation for us. It was, in fact, depressing to have the inferiority of one's character emphasised by a smiling populace. However, we quite agreed with Father Francis Xavier, the pioneer missionary, who considered that in natural goodness the Japanese surpassed all the barbarous races, only we changed the adjective and made use of "civilised." Their self-control certainly carries its reward with it, as the Japanese are said never to suffer from nerves. We rather wondered why Dr Nikola did not start for England and introduce the smiling cure. He could recommend so many hours a day to be devoted to laughing, with the strictest abstinence from annoyance or loss of temper of any sort. We mooted the idea to the doctor, but he said it would be too effective—it would never pay medical men. The doctrine of self-

control must have originated, he considered, in countries where physicians lost their stipends when their patients lost good health.

Foreigners in Japan do not seem to be as lucky with their nervous systems, which are said to be impaired by the frequent earthquake shocks. The first we experienced took place one day when we had gone to Tokio to see a chrysanthemum show. We had looked forward to finding pots full of wonderful flowers; instead, we were invited into little booths which were filled with figures made out of the blossoms and greenery of the plants. The blooms were very small, and it must have taken thousands to form all the representations. In the most popular booth the floral figures were made to imitate the entry of the Japanese troops into Peking; and the mild expressions of the flowers seemed to protest against the ferocity of their attitudes, as a small soldier, formed of dark chrysanthemums, viciously beheaded a Chinaman, gorgeous in yellow blooms. Suddenly the chrysanthemum sword waved in the chrysanthemum hands, and the decapitated chrysanthemum head positively quivered. We were much impressed by the ingenuity that could produce such a realistic effect, and were no less surprised to hear that an earthquake had been the mechanism. The upheavals were so slight that, up till then, we had passed them by unnoticed; after that, whenever the surroundings wobbled, we understood what was taking place.

We were rather disappointed over chrysanthemums. We had expected to find them springing up in every nook and cranny like maidenhair ferns in Ceylon. However, we made sure that our hopes would be realised when a special messenger arrived from Tokio, and we were presented with a large invitation-card,

on top of which figured the Imperial sixteen-leaved chrysanthemum. Our jubilation was great to find ourselves invited to the Mikado's chrysanthemum show, which was to be held in the gardens of the Crown Prince's palace at Tokio.

It was a little alarming to see that there were a number of regulations about clothes. No ladies were to wear black, and as Anemone's prettiest dress happened to be black and white she thought the rule very arbitrary.

"Why can't the Japs stick to their own fashions?" she inquired.

I reminded her that, as they had copied them from the Chinese at the time of the Ming Dynasty, it was not altogether unnatural that they might want a change.

Anemone considered that they would no longer be proof against irritability. It was her opinion that good temper was incompatible with sleeves that were out of date.

The Courier was also troubled because he saw that all gentlemen must appear in top-hats and frock-coats, and he had come unprovided with such, not realising that nowadays without them a man can hardly depend upon getting across the road in Japan. As he had had no invitation this need not have worried him, had not Anemone and I, at the eleventh hour, determined to try and get him one. So, on the chance of being invited, he ordered a frock-coat from a Chinese tailor, who sat up all night to finish the garment, and arrived worn and weary just in time with it next day. Unfortunately a letter arrived at the same moment to say the invitation list was closed. All that remained for the Courier was to escort us to the station in

the magnificence of his new purchase ; while Anemone and I made lamentation and set off rather disconsolately, as every one belonging to the British Legation was in official mourning over the death of a Royalty, and so we knew we should meet no acquaintances from there.

As the train carried us through the rice-fields and past the blue waters of Yedo Bay, a dear little Japanese lady sat opposite us in the carriage. She looked an aristocratic little person in her pale-grey kimono. Bright-coloured gaudy kimonos are only worn by the geisha class. But, unfortunately, she was not bound for the garden-party, at which only European clothes were allowed. We were sorry, as we might perhaps have appropriated her as chaperon. That being impossible, we secured two rickshaws, and the coolies scuttled with us past the moat and walls to the inner sanctuaries of Tokio, and deposited us at the garden gates of the Crown Prince's palace.

We were received by flunkeys in black and white liveries, with scarlet waistcoats and a great show of gold lace. They were stationed at intervals along the garden paths, with here and there policemen to prevent monotony. Some of the flunkeys bowed themselves double as we walked past, so Anemone and I almost curtsied to the right and left of us in our endeavour to live up to the politeness of the footmen of Japan. Some of them, however, ignored our efforts, and looked under—as they could not look over—our heads, with the haughty superciliousness of Britannic servitors.

"No doubt," said Anemone regretfully, "they're realising that it's easier to bow in a kimono than in livery. Manners have to adapt themselves to clothes."

"And people ought to be able to conform to the landscape," I answered, in which case we should have turned into puppets, for the garden was like miniature stage scenery, and we felt as if our dimensions needed to be reduced. We passed little hills covered with little trees. We passed little lakes filled with shaggy-tailed gold fish. Little bridges spanned the little lakes, and little people crossed over the little bridges. Presently we reached an open space where the chrysanthemums were holding a reception. We found them so surprising that we hardly paid them the deference to which, no doubt, they felt entitled as Imperial plants. That year they were all trained into a cone, as if in imitation of Mount Fuji-yama. The blossoms were grown in straight circles round the plants, the heads on one and all of them being exactly equal. Any irregularities disqualified a plant, and Anemone pictured distracted gardeners struggling to train refractory flowers with as much anxiety as the Duchess's roses were painted red in Wonderland.

"Off with his head," quoted Anemone; but it would only be the chrysanthemum's head and not the gardener's, I suppose, in these days of "Enlightened Peace." Some of the guests' heads, however, appeared to anticipate the possibility of such an order, and retired inside top-hats which descended over their ears and eyes. The ladies seemed fairly comfortable. They had evidently passed the heroic stage of elementary struggles with stiff western fashions, and no longer wore their things upside down or inside out. We did not think they looked their best, but then who does in best clothes? Party frocks have such a

way of annihilating most wearers that one wonders why some people do not let their bodies be represented by dress stands when they want to show off obtrusive gowns.

Suddenly the band struck up the curious roll of the Japanese national anthem, and everybody bowed and curtseyed low as the Court officials backed past us, and the Mikado walked by at the head of the Imperial procession. Tall, for a Japanese, and dressed in a simple uniform, Mutsuhito—representative of constitutional miracles—moved on with his bearded chin sunk on his chest, as though still in the deep seclusion that environed the former “descendants of the gods.” Behind him walked the Crown Prince; and then, dressed in mauve, and followed by a train of ladies-in-waiting, came the Empress, with a refined face full of the dignity of the old Fujiwara clan.

After the Imperial hosts had taken their places a few presentations were made, and then the guests were supposed to turn their attention to food. The refreshments were spread on a side table, from which the gentlemen were left to help themselves and the ladies. We deplored the absence of the Courier, as much for our sakes as his own. Without him we ran every risk of hunger, as Anemone would allow no overtures to be made to Yokohama friends.

“Better to *be* famished than *look* needy,” she said.

But she really felt as many misgivings as I did upon the truth of the statement, as we feasted our eyes instead of our mouths, and watched an old gentleman, whose hat and nose were in constant collision, save himself time and trouble by piling all the courses indiscriminately on to one plate. Anemone

thought she felt less hungry as she saw lobster mayonaisse and ice-cream side by side, with turkey and ham in the middle, next to a helping of trifle and a cheese savoury, while a spoonful of fruit salad and a little Yorkshire relish completed the plate-load. Still, it was hard to starve within sight of such a blend of delicacies, and I felt seriously annoyed when Anemone insisted upon our hiding behind a tree because some Yokohama people were walking past.

Fortunately it was a Japanese tree of Japanese dimensions, and it did not prevent our being seen by an officer resplendent in uniform blazing with medals, and Russia came to our rescue in the palace gardens of our future ally. For the rest of the afternoon the Russian naval attaché danced attendance on us, and in addition to feeding us pointed out the celebrities. We were shown the German officer who instructed the police force, the English naval instructor, and several other representatives of the best that Europe could offer, adapted to the needs of the Oriental pioneer. We saw several clean-shaven sailor men, facsimiles of our own naval officers, and found it hard to believe that they belonged to a generation that can still make such a messy exit from life as that of "hara-kiri."

Then once more the Japanese national anthem rolled out, and the Imperial procession passed back to the palace.

"You are for the winter in Japan, mesdames?" inquired the Russian attaché as he walked with us through the garden.

"No," said Anemone. "Can't depend upon the post enough. We're going to Shanghai, I think, soon."

The attaché spoke in English, as Anemone called

French an affected language. "Shanghai? Ah ha! The place for ducks," he said thoughtfully.

Upon which Anemone replied, chillingly, that she believed the shooting was very good round the Yangtse.

"I wasn't going to let him think we understood his silly compliment," she confided to me afterwards, and was quite offended when I explained that she might have spared herself the trouble, as he was only giving the literal translation of an idiom, and everybody in the Far East knows that "*Shanghai est l'endroit d'où viennent les canards.*"

As Anemone could not rest away from the country that contained Benjamin, our days in Japan were numbered, and there was nothing for it but to make the most of the few that remained.

Anemone so deplored the incident of the frock-coat that she quite avoided the Courier, and it was on that account, I suppose, that we found ourselves on the way to Kamakura with a strange young man who had lately arrived at the hotel, and of whom we knew nothing, except that he seemed over-burdened with a sense of his own importance. But then, as I said, we knew still less about the Dai Butsu, and so it came about that we accepted the stranger's offer of escort to Kamakura.

In the train I tried to study how Kamakura came to be of importance through being the place of residence of Yoritomo, the great Shogun, who started the military administration of the provinces, thus forming the feudal system, and before he died, planned the erection of a colossal image of Buddha. I wondered whether I might weave any romance round the name of Itano no Tsubone, who is described as one of his "waiting ladies" who was filled with the "pious

desire" to fulfil his dying injunctions. I appealed to the strange young man for information, but he knew nothing and cared less.

"Dry Boots" was all he said (the terminal *u* of Butsu is not sounded). "Dry Boots? What a remarkable name for a Buddha."

Anemone looked at me, and we mutually named *him* "Dry Boots." Yoritomo did not interest him. He was too much engrossed in expatiating upon the grandeur of his "place at home"—newly acquired, we fancied; and dilating to us about a dinner he had given the night before to several small midshipmen.

"I dared them to drink as much as *I* could," he boasted; "and when they didn't know anything more that was happening, I put them into a sampan and turned them loose in the harbour."

"Poor, poor little middies! Think of their mothers," said Anemone.

But I found my imagination sufficiently harassed by the thought of the middies. We could hardly bear the sight of Dry Boots after this.

Anemone showed her disgust by making her rickshaw coolie start ahead after we reached Kamakura, so she was the first to pass under the archway into the pretty grounds and see the colossal figure, which is almost fifty feet high, the length of the face alone being eight and a half feet.

Anemone turned back to meet me. "I never felt so snubbed in my life," she said; and I understood what she meant when I looked up into the great face of the bronze Dai Butsu. There towered the Buddha, with the majesty of perfect oblivion, perfect repose giving life to his lifeless features. We felt nothing to him, all we that passed by,—to such heights had he risen above us. Unearthly in its expression of

perfect peace was this marvellous representation of the consummation of Enlightenment. But it was this very Rest in Completion which made Nirvana seem a lesser ideal than the kingdom of God, represented always in growth, since fulness of life is incompatible with any idea of finality conceived on this tiny speck of the universe.

The general public was forbidden to take photographs of the Dai Butsu, not on account of any sanctity attached to the image, but simply because fortifications were hidden away somewhere near it. In spite of prohibitions I struggled to get as many likenesses as possible, although it seemed almost desecration to try and snapshot that expression of superhuman tranquillity. Dry Boots had no scruples of this kind; but he grew very unhappy as I persisted in snapping the kodak in the ears of priests and officials. He was sure we should all be arrested, and end our outing by languishing in a Japanese prison. We thought he deserved to go to one, after his treatment of the middies, but hardly considered him worthy of such an interesting experience. However, we all grew hungry, and tore ourselves away from the Dai Butsu to eat a prosaic tiffin at a prosaic hotel. When we arrived we found that the slide of the kodak had been open, and that half a dozen blank portraits of the Buddha were all that we possessed. This was too much for Dry Boots. He had suffered untold agitation for absolutely no purpose. He said he felt ill, and Anemone and I pressed him to return to Yokohama; while we waited for a later train and spent the interval calling upon Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy—the gentle deity who purifies the thoughts of the heart, removes fear from suffer-

ing suppliants, and gives sons to childless women. In her earthly life she is supposed to have been a king's daughter filled with a passion for acquiring knowledge. She wished to pass her life as a nun, and, when this was not allowed, chose death rather than submit to being forced into marriage. I forget all about her image, except that it was made of gilded wood. But no one who has seen it could surely ever forget the peace of Nirvana, as depicted in the thirteenth century by the glyptic artist, Ono-Go-be-ye-mon, on the face of the Dai Butsu of Kamakura.

Nikko, of course, is the place of temples, and to Nikko I stipulated that we must go. Anemone made a careful study of our finances, and calculated that a visit to Nikko was possible, provided we spent no more than a certain sum during the rest of our stay in Yokohama. When she came to me one day and said that we had been invited to go and see a geisha dance at the Maple Club in Tokio, my first inquiry was, "Are you sure we can afford it?"

Anemone was quite decided that we could. She said our finances would even allow us to sleep the night in Tokio; but she looked rather crestfallen later on when she discovered that the geisha dance was not to be provided gratis. However, our share was not to be very large. "We can *just* afford it," said Anemone, making some abstruse calculations.

So to Tokio we went. The Courier and Dry Boots were included in the party. At least Dry Boots, uninvited, included himself. In the evening we started out, one behind the other, a long procession of rickshaws. Moonlight glistened on the waters of the moat, and the shadows were inky black as we turned down a long avenue of tall cryptomerias

that brought us to the quaint little Maple Club standing in its pretty garden. Little people in kimonos rubbed their hands on their knees and bent double as we removed our shoes before entering. Anemone was very embarrassed because a panting Japanese ran up, bowed low, and presented her with a pair of pink silk stockings. She understood about taking off her shoes, but had no idea that it was the custom to put on extra hose. She was just sternly stating that nothing would induce her to copy the indecorous Japanese habit of dressing in public, when I recognised the pink foot-gear as my own possessions. I had left them about in my room, so a hotel-runner had considerably followed in pursuit with them. Possibly the citizens of New Japan occasionally forget to put on items of western clothes. The women examined us and our garments as eagerly as though we were the first white people they had seen; and as we knew that we were not, we thought it rather unnecessary to find ourselves treated as curios.

A Japanese friend of the Courier's had come with us to explain everything we might not understand. "Ancient times" were what he made reference to incessantly, with such a curious accent, that Dry Boots at last asked him not to tell us so much about the Argentines but a little more about Japan. But instead of the "ancient times' customs" Anemone wanted to hear all about his wife. Unfortunately, the subject bored him; perhaps he thought it inappropriate when geisha were what we had come to see.

"Why you always talk me—my wife—my wife?" he said. "I am sick of my wife."

No doubt he would have said "my contemptible

wife" had he spoken in Japanese, for everybody should depreciate himself and his belongings according to Japanese etiquette. But Anemone took the remark as a slight upon matrons all the world over, and devoted her attention to the furniture, or rather to its absence, as some square cushions were all there was. She wished house-furnishing could be undertaken as cheaply elsewhere. There certainly seemed no necessity to crowd up interiors after testing the convenience of finding one's own persons the only contents of a Japanese room.

"Civilisation multiplies artificial worries," said Dry Boots, sitting down on the padded mat floor and leaning his back against the paper wall.

"It multiplies dust and dusters," said Anemone.

The wall was a sliding panel, and was also made use of as a door; so the entry of supper through it led to the unintentional exit of Dry Boots, who expressed different views upon civilisation as he abruptly disappeared.

The presentation of fans took the place of *hors d'œuvre*.

"That means that everything to follow is a present. A fan is the sign of a gratuitous gift," said Dry Boots, returning through the wall and giving us the benefit of this false statement as he reseated himself as far as possible from his uncertain background.

Anemone and I accepted a fan each with gratitude, but we grew embarrassed when we each had a large wooden box pressed upon us filled with sugared cakes, jellies, and irises and chrysanthemums made out of sugary sweets. We tried to explain that it went against our principles to accept presents from strangers, but the little "musume" only laughed more delightedly, and insisted on our taking delicate

china saké cups, and then showed us how to manipulate chop-sticks in one hand. For by this time the courses were following one upon another with rapidity, as our appetites were not sharpened to the point of proper appreciation of the whole bill of fare. Dry Boots, at any rate, enjoyed the sweet warm saké. "Another cup of saké, Ne San," he requested, smacking his lips. And the little "Ne San" was delighted to give him saké or anything else that he liked. The Japanese could hardly be anything but amiable, considering that the education of their mothers has chiefly consisted of learning how, under all circumstances, never to frown at men, but only and always to smile.

When supper was done the musicians came in, and twanged their samisens and droned weird airs while the geisha danced.

The first was the "Kumono-sei," or dance of the Fairy Spider. The spider was a geisha (a yam yam she was called on the programme), in a grey kimono; and her movements and postures were so spider-like that they were enough to make even a mason-fly shiver, especially when she flung a web made of strips of weighted paper over another little yam yam—her prey. The description on our programmes was as follows: "The dance originated to a fairy tale of an old spider who lived over thousand years in a cave, and obtained miraculous power and used to devour many human lives. The Mikado of the reign sent a brave warrior, named Raiko, who killed spider transformed a woman after strong resistance." But in spite of graphic explanations from the Japanese gentleman, we could not quite follow the thread of this narrative in the dance.

Then we saw the dance of the cotton-bleachers, in

which strips of material were waved by four dancers, and the maple dance, said never to be seen anywhere except at the Maple Club. The kimonos were exquisite, and some of the dancers were quick-change artists, and suddenly shed their outer garments and appeared in even lovelier under-kimonos.

The most curious dance of all was described as "a lion and lioness sporting on a stone bridge in a garden of peonies." Pretty faces peeped out under shaggy manes, and the yam yams might have spent their lives in zoological gardens, so marvellously feline did they represent themselves.

It was sad to tear ourselves away at the end of the performance and put on our shoes with the little lady's help.

"Sayonara,"—if it must be—they cried in the prettiest chorus, as our rickshaws scuttled away with us where the moonlight fell in splashes across the black shadows of the trees.

But next morning when we came down we found the breakfast table chiefly occupied by a bill; and so too were our thoughts. All the kind presents, for which we had thanked so profusely and tried our hardest to return, were mentioned in full detail in the account. Even the rags in which they were done up to keep the boxes clean in the rickshaws were charged for at high prices. Anemone's observations upon Japanese gratuities were fluent, to say the least.

"What about Nikko?" was all that I demanded sorrowfully, as I packed a forest of cedar trees which I had purchased between the chop-sticks and the saké cup and the flowers made of sweets.

Anemone declined to have anything more to do with the remains of her supper. She bequeathed

them to the hotel proprietor, as she said they must be made a present to somebody after so many thanks had been squandered on them. Nothing would induce me to part from mine after the expense they had put me to, so I returned to Yokohama carrying the parcel in its white rag covering, and Anemone said I looked as if I were taking the washing home.

After all, it was not remarkable that one should have to buy presents one did not want in a country in which the people had just discovered that mixed bathing, minus bathing suits, was not considered civilised, and in an outburst of propriety divided men from women by fastening a bamboo across each public bath.

I thought much about Nikko, though delicacy of feeling did not let me express my sentiments. Still they rankled in my mind even during the courses of several dinners to which we were invited to meet Japanese celebrities—men whose names figure in the daily papers, and whose daughters, as well as sons, had in some cases been educated abroad. One girl we met had taken all sorts of degrees at American colleges, and was now busy translating ‘Adam Bede’ and ‘Vanity Fair’ into Japanese. We wondered what Becky Sharp was thought of by young women righteously trained in the “Three Obediences.” We used to go home hoping that air-ships might soon be discovered and Mars explored, for certainly every one everywhere would soon be exactly the same all over this little globe.

Before long, as the date drew near for the *Empress* to arrive and carry us to “the place where the ducks come from,” I once more interviewed Anemone on the subject of Nikko. But, as it happened, what is known as a “Fuji gale” set in that very same day. The

wind rose to a hurricane. The waves bounced across the bund and battered the hotel windows. In many parts traffic was stopped.

"We can't go to Nikko on account of the weather," said Anemone.

But I knew better. I knew we should not go to the place of temples, and, therefore, according to the Japanese, know nothing of beauty, all because of those superfluous presents heaped on us at the geisha dance. But the storm saved Anemone's "face," to use the Chinese expression, and it was a revelation as to the possibilities of the Japanese climate. Up till then, with the exception of the rain at Myanoshita, we had seen nothing but a sun and sky as radiant as the smiling inhabitants. Now, for a few days, we were as much surprised by the weather as the Russians have been since by the "little Japs" as foes. By the time the wind subsided and several yachts lay pitiful wrecks along the bund, the *Empress* had entered the harbour and the time for leaving Yokohama had come.

I climbed on the familiar deck, carrying what Anemone called my washing, and though no one seemed to appreciate the Maple Club delicacies, everybody on board was unanimous in congratulating us upon having been thoroughly successful in how *not* to see Japan.

CHAPTER XXII.

SHANGHAI.

WUSUNG! Do you know it—that spot where the Whang-poa river flows into the estuary of the Yangtse-kiang? Wusung! The name sounded dismal, and nothing could have looked more dreary than the place. Fine rain was falling upon mud-coloured waters from a sky which looked so dirty that one could not help wishing that the clouds would not undertake laundry work. Nothing was visible of the flat river banks except a faint yellow outline. Here and there a burnt sienna junk sail added a deeper touch to the general scheme of jaundiced colouring, and the grey sides of a warship loomed gigantic through the mist.

Anemone and I splashed down the gangway of the *Empress* and went on board the tender, which took an hour and a half threading its way up the Whang-poa through a labyrinth of junks, sampans, and river-boats, while from gunboats and merchant vessels drooped the dripping dejected flags of the different western nations. We were coming to the land of complexities, and it seemed suitable to find it enveloped in fog. We had left the country of miracles—the islands with the forty million inhabitants, who, now coming to the forefront of modern civilisation and progress, were originally entirely influenced in their

religion, literature, art, and even their national costume, by this Middle Kingdom, now boasting its population of four hundred million Chinese. Who can prophesy what may happen now that China is renewing her existence and beginning to avail herself of modern discovery?

"Extremes meet. I suppose that explains my affection for the Chinese," I said to Anemone, as we sat side by side on the tender, with Lord Pouring and General Dripping for our select society, as the old Scotch gatekeeper said. "Fancy being brought up to think that anything not taught by Confucius is not worth knowing. Surely one spontaneous thought is worth a thousand importations from somebody else's brain."

Anemone appeared to think this observation conceited, and I also felt it to be ridiculous, as other people's wise thoughts must be of more use than our own foolish ones, and we can form none of our own until those of other people have first been received. Still, is it not a fault of educational systems in more countries than China to overrate the use of the brain as a receptacle for receiving impressions and under-rate its use as an organ for originating them?

"Fancy," I went on, "being brought up to think one's ancestors so important that one's only hope in life is to be one after death. Fancy having to live under the thumb of a mother-in-law. I expect Chinese women are as good as any others in managing men somehow or other by hook or by crook. You may depend it's being at the mercy of other women that drives so many poor little wives to commit suicide. Fancy being liable to be divorced and sold because you haven't a son. Fancy having to do everything by rote because other people have done

the same before, though that is the bane of a great many countries, of course. Imagine having to write all one's thoughts in symbols and combine those symbols to make further meanings—to have to put the character sun by the character moon, for instance, to represent the word 'bright.' Can you imagine any one more unsuited to being a Chinese than I am?" I asked.

"No, I can't," said Anemone, with the greatest decision.

"Well! why is it, then, that I feel in such sympathy with them?"

Anemone had no idea.

"Perhaps it's because of their contradictions. There is no opinion of them which one can hold which is not both true and untrue. And, after all, that is not peculiar to them. In most things one can hold diametrically opposite views. There is really no such thing as one opinion. The one is probably a blend of quite twenty. Therefore contradictory statements are not the least ridiculous. What is ridiculous is not to contradict oneself a great deal more than one does. Consequently, with the Chinese it's quite logical to say that they are a most kindly people and a cruel people, that they make the greatest use of time, working early and late, and that knowledge of time and its use doesn't enter their heads at all."

"If you were studying Chinese," said Anemone, "I should say that the language was having its usual effect upon foreigners. As you aren't, you haven't the slightest excuse for going mad. And pray, don't just now; it would be so inopportune."

After that snub I discontinued my criticism of the Celestials, and helped Anemone hunt in her dressing-case for two pieces of paper on which long lists of

addresses were written down. Anemone was still saving up for Peking, and continued on what the Courier called "the how-much tack." The Courier had travelled with us as far as Wusung, and there we said good-bye. Parted from him, Anemone felt free to practise economy without any restriction, and intended to begin to do so at once. She scorned an invitation we had to visit some Shanghai friends.

"If we begin by staying with people," she said, "it will end in our taking expensive rooms afterwards and having no money left to get to Peking."

She also decided against going to the Astor House Hotel, even for the first night.

"We must practise rigid economy from the start," she adjured me. "Take two rickshaws and hunt at once for accommodation in a boarding-house."

"I'm sure I shall hate a boarding-house," I objected. "The very name's depressing. It won't let one forget melancholy people sitting round a melancholy table eating melancholy food."

Still, I quite agreed that economy was advisable, and so the first thing we did when we reached Shanghai was to commit our luggage into the care of the C.P.R. agent and make him promise to leave the godown open, so that we should be able to get our things out whenever we came back.

"Accomplished first step to economy. Second step—two rickshaws," said Anemone.

There was no difficulty about this, as rickshaws were lined up in waiting along the bund, and an excited chorus of coolies gave tongue the moment we landed: "Hey, Mississi! Rickshaw, Mississi? Mississi! Hey! Hey! Mississi! Bomby, Mississi?" But no, we did not want them "bomby" (by-and-by). We wanted them at once—"chop chop."

I was delighted to deliver myself up to a dear mild-faced Chinese coolie, ready to do his best to the uttermost, but a rickshaw in torrents of rain is one of the most miserable of conveyances, though a wheel-barrow would be worse. Being long in the body, it was almost impossible for me to cram my head, much less my hat, in under the hood. The footboard was turning into a pond, and volleys of mud splashed over one from puddles in the road. However, night had fallen, and though lights twinkled along the bund and the coolies carried their paper lanterns, we had not sufficient illumination to see all the damage in which our struggle after economy was involving our poor clothes.

Anemone shouted the first address on her paper. Off trotted the coolies, and after a little time drew up at the foot of a flight of steps. We scrambled out of the rickshaws, and Anemone stood still and soliloquised while the rain descended upon a long winter coat which she had brought out new from England, and of which, as being the latest thing in fashions, she felt justifiably proud.

"Which is it to be—economy or health? If I wear my coat any longer it will be ruined and not fit to be seen all the rest of the winter. If I don't die now I'll be certain to die in the winter without my coat. Whereas my dying won't hurt my coat,—it'll do for somebody else. So any way it's more important to save my coat than myself, for my coat could do without me but I couldn't do without my coat. Economy conquers!" and so saying she pulled off her coat and climbed up the wet steps, shivering, while the rain soaked through her blouse.

We pealed a bell and were not kept long waiting. A China boy appeared.

"Can we see Mississi?" we asked, our pidgin English not yet fluent.

"Go out," said the boy, and shut the door in our faces.

Such a rebuff was so entirely unexpected that we both felt almost ready to cry.

"Perhaps he didn't think it respectable to come about rooms so late in the evening," Anemone suggested, slipping down the steps, coat and all.

"Very likely," I agreed as I tumbled after her. "Of course the Chinese have such strict ideas of propriety."

"Never mind," said Anemone. "It's a necessity. It's got to be done," and she clambered into the rickshaw and shouted the next address.

This time we stopped in a gloomy terrace more like a suburb of London than a street in an eastern town. Again we rang the bell, and when the Chinese servant appeared inquired for Mississi. Again the boy answered tersely, "go out."

I placed myself in the doorway. "I shall *not* go out," I said haughtily.

The boy's face assumed an expression which a foreigner often calls up on Celestial visages,—one more of pity than contempt.

"Go out," he repeated distinctly.

"I shall *not*," I said, feeling as pig-headed as any Chinese.

The boy looked even more sorry for me. "Mississi have go out," he said slowly.

Much abashed I retired off the doorstep.

"They've only been telling us that their mistresses are out," I explained.

"Mississi no have got. Mississi have go out," continued the boy, evidently wishing to do the best he

could for the ignorant barbarians whose own language even appeared incomprehensible to them.

Anemone jumped at the "no have got." It was a relief after the curt "go out."

"Mississi no have got?" she inquired.

"Yes," said the boy.

"Good gracious! Then she's here after all," said Anemone.

"No, she isn't," I assured her. "The boy says 'yes' to the 'no,'—that's just what a Chinese would say. It's much more correct than answering 'no' to 'no,' as we should. The boy understands that two negatives make an affirmative."

"It's no use stopping to give a discourse," said Anemone. "The thing is to find out——" But, fortunately, Mississi herself solved the difficulty as she collided with the coolies in her efforts to struggle past the rickshaws to her own front door.

"You've come about rooms? Certainly I can let you have accommodation;" and we did not wonder at it when she let us in, and we smelt dust that might have celebrated the first opening of Shanghai as a treaty port. We offered thanks in profusion and beat our retreat as fast as we could.

The next house the coolies took us to looked a cheerful one, but the moment the boy opened the door a voice called down the stairs, "It's no use asking for rooms here,—my house is entirely full."

"Start the addresses on your paper, Griselda," said Anemone. "There doesn't seem any luck about mine."

But the first I made out by the light of the coolies' lanterns led us a longer chase than the others. First we were drawn up at a house which we marched into boldly, but were promptly ejected, as it happened to

be a gentlemen's club. Once more the coolies scuttled away, and then stopped in triumph at a building entitled "Mustard & Co." "Mustard & Co." showed no signs of being able to put out a helping hand to us, so there was nothing for it but to urge the coolies on in the search after Mrs Marks. They made desperate efforts, and ran from door to door waving their paper lanterns, and at last found a door-plate on which we read "Mrs Sampson," and found that Mrs Marks had inconsiderately changed her name. She had no accommodation to offer, so the time had been spent in vain.

The next house we came to was a fine one. We were received by a little woman with a halo of grey curls. She could let us have two small bedrooms, no private sitting-room,—oh, no! she could not spare that amount of space now that Shanghai was filled with the "military"—British, French, German—"military" everywhere. Soon no rooms would be available for love or money, Shanghai was getting so full. But we should not feel the want of a private sitting-room,—there was such a large general one; and she had twelve daughters, and they were accustomed to living with their guests *en famille*. Every now and then they turned out the drawing-room and had a little dance. There were so many officers in Shanghai at present, and she loved her twelve daughters and her young lady guests to have a happy time.

As she beamed and smiled at us, quite like a Japanese, we caught sight of one of the twelve daughters giving an English lesson to an emaciated French officer.

"I couldn't face it," whispered Anemone. "I couldn't do *en famille* with twelve daughters and make myself agreeable to any rubbish they bring in."

We said good-night to the lady with the grey halo, and she shook her head warningly as the rickshaws clattered away. Well she might, for it was very late by this time, and Hong Kew, where we next directed the coolies, was the other end of the town—the part, filled with drinking-saloons and gambling-dens, which first originated the nautical expression, “shanghaied.” But we did not know that then, and were in consequence unconcerned.

At last we reached the address we wanted. We were ushered into the house, and waited twenty minutes in a musty sitting-room. Then a tall figure in a dressing-gown appeared. A white face stared solemnly at us, and a sepulchral voice murmured, “Excuse my appearance. I was lying down with a nervous headache. My nerves are all shattered since my poor, dear husband was drowned in the river. The doctor says a sea voyage is the only cure for them. Such a tragedy! Such a tragedy! And I’m sure I always did my duty by him as a wife.”

Thereupon, to our consternation, the dressing-gown heaved violently and the unfortunate woman began to laugh and cry in the same breath. A Chinese boy came to our assistance, armed with smelling-salts and sal volatile, and so in the middle of the night we found ourselves in wet clothes dosing an hysterical stranger in a remote quarter of Hong Kew. Certainly Anemone’s essay in economy had brought about unexpected results. Fortunately, when we left the house we were cheered by the countenances of the rickshaw coolies, who were impervious to wet, distance, and hour, and were just as charmed with us and our errand as when we first started out. We ourselves could not say as much. It was so

late that we decided that we must just go anywhere for the night.

"Only *not* the Astor House Hotel," Anemone stipulated. "In that case we should save nothing, and simply have the extra expense of paying for these rickshaws."

The first thing to be done was to find the C.P.R. godown, as we had nothing with us except the clothes upon us, and they were all soaked through and through, except Anemone's coat. We left Hong Kew and returned to the part from which we had originally started, but the C.P.R. godown could not be found. At last we came to a passage which we hoped might lead to it, so we left the rickshaws and walked a little way. All we came to was an old Chinese busily chopping up a reeking fish. He only stared and laughed, and said, "no savvee" when we questioned him, and hacked away more vigorously. We caught a glimpse of more Chinese at the other end of the passage, and would have gone on had not the old man paused in his chopping: "More better no makee go; plenty muchee men," he said; and having delivered this warning he set to work at his fish again. We thought it so considerate of him to caution us, and returned to our rickshaw coolies feeling the most agreeable confidence in the Chinese.

We had just started off again when we heard a great noise, and several French soldiers charged down the bund, pointing their bayonets. They were drunk—that was certain; and what more would have happened was very uncertain had not the coolies immediately turned and taken refuge in a quiet courtyard where, without knowing it, they deposited us opposite the C.P.R. godown. But our spirits sank to zero—the godown was locked up! We stood in the rain disconsolate,

and several Chinese crowded round and talked, but were unable to help us at all. Finally, a man in European clothes appeared upon the scene. His nationality would probably be known as Portuguese in the Far East, but if the French savant's calculation be correct that we each had 20,000,000 ancestors living in the year 1000 A.D., this man's physiognomy looked as if each of the 20,000,000 had been of a different nationality, though the racial diversities of the planet could hardly have supplied the amount. But we hailed him as a boon and a blessing, in spite of his uncouth looks, for he sent a coolie to the native city to find the godown keeper, and gave us shelter in the C.P.R. office until the arrival of the godown key. We found that the boarding-house in the gloomy terrace was the nearest to get to, and so, regardless of other considerations, we went there for the night. The coolies parted from us in great satisfaction over the pittance they received. "Morning time?" they inquired; and we found to our amazement that they were actually offering themselves for another wild-goose chase. We should certainly want them, so we beamed upon them and echoed, "morning time."

The first I knew of the morning was Anemone's voice inquiring, "Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh — that's all I've had to be thankful for. I've been feeding on paint all night. They've evidently just painted my room, and I know they've painted me. I'm coated inside and out. I've spent the night wondering whether it was you or me whom I should wake up to find dead." Anemone is Irish, too, on her mother's side.

We were still alive, it appeared, though it seemed doubtful whether we should remain so as we dressed ourselves in our damp and draggled clothes. They

might just as well be wet at the start, as Shanghai was continuing her lengthy bath, and torrents of rain were washing the window-panes.

We paid our modest account and then reseated ourselves in the rickshaws. The faithful coolies had been waiting outside the door from early dawn. We had another long useless search and then came to a rather peculiar decision. We determined to go to the nice looking house which we had been told was quite full when we went there the previous evening.

"They said they had no room," I reminded Anemone.

"Never mind," she said. "They must find us a niche of some sort."

We presented ourselves at the door, and instead of asking "Mississi have got?" we took that for granted and demanded, "Mississi wanchee see." We were shown into a charming sitting-room and Mississi appeared. She was a little woman, with a pale, lined face and pointed foxy features. She wore a rusty black hat, fur slippers on her feet, and her hands were thrust deep into the pockets of a long brown ulster.

"Have you rooms to let?" we inquired.

"No, I have nothing at all," she responded in such a deep tragic voice that Anemone jumped and I laughed, which was incorrect, but seemed to establish better relations.

"I shall have by-and-by, when the American Consul goes," she continued.

This sounded promising, and Anemone begged her to find some corner for us meantime. We should eventually want two bedrooms and a private sitting-room. For the time being we could do with one bedroom between us.

Miss Wake poised herself with one foot on the fender, her finger in her mouth and her eyes staring vacantly at her toes.

"You could have this for your private sitting-room," she said at last, "if you would allow some of my gentlemen boarders to chow here. They're busy men. They'll only chow here twice a-day,—that'll be all you'll see of them. It'll be nicer for you to chow in company."

We had great doubts about this, but saw nothing for it but to agree.

"What's through there?" I asked, pointing to an open door with a screen across it.

"Oh! that's the bedroom of Herr von Fink—a very charming German gentleman. He only comes here to sleep. His nights are short. You needn't mind. He won't disturb you."

"We'll be able to have the door shut, of course."

"No, I'm sorry you won't. He goes in for the open-air cure. He specially stipulates that the door shall be left open."

This did not please us, but again there seemed no help for it, especially as, until the departure of the American Consul, we were still unprovided with a bedroom.

"Will this do for you for the present? It's very small, I admit, but there's just space to get two beds into it, I think," said Miss Wake, indicating a minute apartment filled up with boxes.

"Whose are those?" I asked.

"Oh! an American gentleman keeps them here—just empty cases. He's in the north himself writing books. He's a celebrated author, you know," and she seemed to expect us to feel honoured by the sight of his belongings.

In addition to the deep tragic voice making all Miss Wake's speeches impressive, they were interesting as well on account of the extraordinary blend of accents she had cultivated. The basis was Scotch, with a superstructure of Australian cockney. There were evident American and Chinese additions, with a finish of rollicking r's and broad vowel sounds that was wholly original. Her manner was most dramatic, and her hand action alone would have gained her the part of leading lady in a theatrical company.

She was very prompt in all she undertook. We went away to fetch our things, and when we came back a transformation scene had taken place in the small apartment. The boxes had vanished. Two beds took their places. Anemone and I sat up in them to eat our dinner, as we did not feel equal to encountering the "gentlemen boarders" the first evening. Miss Wake came in to keep us company, and sat on the dressing-table as there was no room for any chairs. She thought we should feel more at home if she gave us a slight sketch of the people with whom we should have to "chow."

"There's an American gentleman. You mustn't mind him," she said. "He comes from the Peking Legations. The siege made him queer in the head—quite a convenient queerness; he never speaks—that's the way it's taken him. Then there's Huyghens—he's very old family. He came over to England with William of Orange—very old, of course, I mean before that. Then there's Vrouw" (the name was not Vrouw, but that was the nearest we got to it)—"he's Scandinavian, in the past, of course, a Viking—his people, I mean. He's one of the heads of the telegraph, so he always wants his

meals to the moment—chop chop. There's Mr Bull, too—Septimus Bull. Ah! you'll like him. He's worthy. He takes great interest in the Young Men's Christian Association;" and, having stamped this hall-mark of respectability upon this personage with the strange appellation, Mississi Wake removed the remains of our dinner, and wished us good-night in the voice of Lady Macbeth.

Next morning she presented us with the servitor who was to "maid" us, or rather "boy" us, and look after us generally. Globe-trotters descant upon the uniformity of all Chinese, but in reality they vary very distinctly. This particular China boy was certainly unlike any other we ever came across. He shrouded every statement in the deepest mystery, and prefaced the most ordinary announcements by rolling his eyes from corner to corner, placing his finger on his lips and hissing "Sh! sh! sh!" through closed teeth. At tiffin time, instead of copying the English butler's solemn intimation, "luncheon is served," this strange Celestial tiptoed towards us, held up his finger, and whispered confidentially, "Sh! sh! sh! chow!"

Miss Wake having introduced us by hearsay to the members of the establishment, now presented them in person and then left us to their society. We recognised each after the graphic description. The American who had turned queer in the head after the siege of the Legations shuffled to his place and sat with his eyes glued to his plate. Mr Huyghens sat by Anemone and did the honours. His conversation was interminable and quite interfered with her repast. The Viking was small and plump, and as much unlike one's idea of his ancestors as any descendant could be. He called us

"ze ladees," and quite embarrassed us by his complimentary remarks. Mr Septimus Bull was middle-aged, and had a smile like the Cheshire cat's. Benevolence exuded from every feature, but he had scarcely even heard of the Y.M.C.A., so that particular recommendation of Miss Wake's was proved entirely fictitious. He considered himself a serious-minded man, however, addicted to improving conversation, and was much puzzled by our hilarity, which placed him in the predicament of appearing to pose as a wit. The whole company seemed to appreciate the presence of "ze ladees," and Anemone decided that we might have done worse, for, except at tiffin and dinner time, we had the entire and exclusive use of the "chow room," and as it was comfortable and well furnished we were ready to pay Miss Wake the rather exorbitant price she asked.

We were, however, a little disconcerted next evening by an unexpected intrusion. The screen was pushed aside and a German gentleman, presumably Herr von Fink, made his way into the room. He stopped upon seeing us and looked considerably startled.

"Please don't move. Please make yourselves comfortable," he said with a great show of politeness.

We let him understand that he really need not trouble to invite us to do this. We were perfectly comfortable, and had been so all the afternoon. Then, as he did not go, but stood in an uncertain way grasping the back of a chair, we thought we had better set him an example in correct behaviour, so we got up, bowed stiffly, and left the room. It was a nuisance to have to spend the next hour sitting upon our beds, but we forgot

to mention the incident to Miss Wake, as our thoughts were taken up by ordering in a piano. A dozen coolies arrived with it next day, and Miss Wake appeared just as they were establishing it in the sitting-room.

"A piano in here?" said Miss Wake. "Oh! I can't have that."

"Why ever not?" we asked in astonishment, and Miss Wake seemed to have no reason to give. Indeed, when she saw the piano opened she became interested, and volunteered the fact that she played the mandoline.

"Bring it here and I'll try your accompaniments," suggested Anemone.

Miss Wake brought it, and for the next half hour scratched and scraped with a stiffened fore-arm, as though she were polishing a floor. Anemone lost some of the effects in her efforts as accompanist, but I was the unhappy audience, and to me it seemed as though the teeth of China's entire population were chattering simultaneously in four hundred million heads.

Again that evening the screen was pushed aside and the German gentleman appeared before us.

"Good evening," he said. "I am very glad you are so comfortable. Ah! I see a piano"—and he looked still more surprised.

Anemone was so anxious to know why a piano should be regarded as such a great innovation that she invited Herr von Fink to be seated, and he sat down on the extreme edge of a chair in a hesitating way. He was certainly nice looking, and most gentlemanly. He wore a black suit that harmonised with his melancholy expression, and contrasted with the fairness of his hair and short pointed beard.

He spoke English so perfectly that he condescended to talk in German, and Anemone and I enjoyed practising that language again. When we went to dress for dinner we both agreed in our favourable opinion, and supposed that he had thought it only polite to come and pay us a call. We wished Mr Huyghens were a little more like him. Anemone greatly objected to that individual,—he was so inquisitive. He was always commenting upon the house being so full, and throwing out hints that he would like to know where Miss Wake had made room for us. All such inquiries Anemone treated in a high and mighty manner, and merely said that Miss Wake had made us very comfortable, which was scarcely accurate.

On the fifth day after our arrival we had finished tiffin, and Anemone and I had left the room just ahead of the others, when our boy tiptoed up to us, with his finger signalling caution as usual. "Sh! sh! sh! One piecee foleign man makee come back."

We were not left a moment in doubt as to the meaning of this explanation, for behind the boy there stalked a tall American, and Yankee accents demanded loudly in the full hearing of Mr Huyghens, Mr Septimus Bull, the Viking, &c., "Are you the two ladies who've taken my room?"

We were not really guilty, for though we appeared to have erred, it had all been done in ignorance, but all the same we felt terribly upset. However, being women, and Irish into the bargain, we heightened complications by beginning to laugh. At first we laughed feebly, and then more violently, regardless of the fact that the "celebrated author" (whose books we have subsequently perused with particular

interest) was behaving magnificently — apologising profusely to make up for our deficiencies, assuring us that ladies must on no account be troubled, and that he could go perfectly well to the Astor House Hotel.

"*You explain*," said Anemone, who always left me the unpleasant transactions.

I delivered my explanation, such as it was, with tears deluging my cheeks; and they could hardly have been taken for signs of contrition, as such queer sounds emanated from Anemone in the background. The American author backed down the staircase, protesting that the Astor House was the very place for him, that he had never been less incommoded, or indeed more pleasantly surprised, in his life. But he left his razor and shaving-brush behind him, for Anemone found them on her bed.

"I shall never, never, never," she moaned, "be able to hold up my head again before Huyghens."

I took no notice, for I was admonishing Fido, as Anemone had named our servitor, to search high and low over the premises for the truly guilty Miss Wake.

She discreetly vanished until the evening, and then she treated the matter as unworthy her concern. "He's a man," she said. "He can shift for himself. I never put myself about for men. They're not worth it. No successful woman ever does. Take the Dowager-Empress of China, for instance. There's success for you! How did she get it? By bothering her head about a man? Not she! She bothered about a woman. When she was the secondary wife of Hsienfeng, did she go whining to the Emperor? No! She kept in with the Empress, and so she came to be Empress herself. That's the secret—keep in with women! Keep in with women, and men won't fall out with you."

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHANGHAI.

THE American Consul left. Anemone and I were transferred to his room. The American author was able to return, and order once more reigned at "Wan-Shao-Shan," as we named Miss Wake's establishment, for, owing to her admiration for the Empress-Dowager, we thought it suitable to call the abode after the summer palace of that far-famed dignitary. Mr Huyghens also left, to Anemone's great relief; but we could not pounce upon his room, as it was immediately filled by a young man whom Miss Wake described as "an historical character—Robert the Bruce." He was a nice young fellow, and he was musical. So was Mr Septimus Bull. They highly approved of the piano, and petitioned for "musical evenings." This was more than we felt equal to, so, to avoid them, we had to spend the evenings up-stairs. Miss Wake quite approved.

"That's right," she said; "keep yourselves to yourselves. I do the same. I've made it my rule through life."

The coolie also approved. His chief attendance was on the fire, but he assumed a paternal guardianship over us as well. When questioned as to our whereabouts he never vouchsafed any information, but

silenced inquiries by stating with dignity, "Belong proper lady. Go topside."

As the "gentlemen boarders" could not indulge in musical evenings with us, they decided to have musical evenings without us, and one night Miss Wake burst into our room with a terrified countenance: "Bull's thumping on the piano. Robert the Bruce has brought down his music, and Fink will soon be in."

We saw no reason why he should stay out, and though Miss Wake was trembling with agitation, we did not waste much sympathy. Our annoyance was given vent to next day when we found the piano transferred to our bedroom, which was already so full that we were hardly able to turn. We shared a writing-table, and the litter on it led to so many differences of opinion that we agreed to go halves in no other article of furniture; and so we had a dressing-table apiece, a wardrobe apiece, a bed apiece, though mine was a camp one, which only did duty by night and descended during the day. We were obliged to share a large dress-stand. Anemone called it the "merry-go-round," but I thought it was more like a "merry-andrew," as it had an irritating habit of tumbling over whenever one wanted anything off it in a hurry; and both the boy and the coolie had to come to our assistance before it could be raised again. However, Miss Wake declared we must be comfortable. She said it was proved by Anemone growing fatter every day. To obviate the overcrowding of our room she arranged a system of pulleys, by which the furniture could be drawn up to the ceiling, and merely pulled down when actually in use. Anemone did not appreciate this scheme as much as Miss Wake expected. She said her nerves

would be shattered if she spent her life in jeopardy with the merry-go-round suspended above her head. Consequently Miss Wake was not allowed to take out a patent for the invention, though we admired her ingenuity, which was also much appreciated by Herr von Fink. He often called upon us, and was always so melancholy that Anemone said we must look upon it as a positive duty to cheer him up. He had a friend in some distant chamber of the establishment, a young German Count, who seemed to be in a permanent condition of approaching dissolution, so that his society rather depressed than enlivened Herr von Fink. The latter appeared to be deploring the evil consequences of twenty duels, since the honour and glory of having been always victor could not counterbalance the havoc wrought upon other lives.

Anemone and I had not, however, much time to devote to the other members of the establishment, as directly every one knew that Benjamin was in Peking with the Allies we were ranked as "military ladies," and were at once in the full swing of Shanghai hospitalities. A military element was new to Shanghai, and was consequently warmly welcomed. No Shanghai belle was in fashion without a military beau.

It was a curious place—that Far Eastern emporium. It was so strangely cosmopolitan, and the features of the Orient and the Occident were so intermingled that one seemed to step backwards and forwards from Europe to Asia at different bends in the roads. At that time the streets were more than usually thronged by people of all nationalities. Smart little Gurkhas swaggered past German soldiers. Sikhs and Baluchis marvelled greatly at a Frenchwoman in bloomers. Missionaries in Chinese dress brushed by English

"bobbies" and Sikh and Chinese policemen. Stately Chinamen marched along the pavements, and small-footed Chinawomen quavered across the roads. Here and there one noticed a Korean in a tall hat, or a French officer bestriding a miniature Annamite pony, while the daughters of a go-ahead Chinese compradore were actually seen mounted on bicycles.

Anemone and I went in daily terror of having our careers cut short by wheel-barrows. They are the most popular native conveyances, and were prototypes, Anemone believed, of Irish jaunting-cars. When occupied by half a dozen passengers they need a great deal of elbow, or rather foot, room, and Anemone thought it would be quite possible to end one's days ignominiously under one, if not already run over by a China pony instead. These latter, driven by mafoos,—the Chinese equivalent for coachmen,—rushed along as precipitately as though bound for the land's end of China instead of the top of the Bubbling Well Road. In those days there were only two principal drives to be taken in Shanghai: the one to the Point was not much patronised; along the other, the Bubbling Well Road, the carriages raced helter-skelter, and when they reached the terminus started back at the same furious pace. It is quite a relief to Anemone to hear that forty miles of road have since been added round Shanghai, and that the speed of the China ponies would have found an outlet had it not been for such innovations as electric trams and motor-cars. In fact, Shanghai has so altered that the town we knew is scarcely existent—a great up-to-date city has taken its place. All manner of occupants drove in the carriages, from Chinese women with ornaments in their hair and powder and paint on their faces to brokers, swinging a foot in readiness to jump down

and run in and out from office to office, making perhaps several thousands of dollars at each call. Their ponies scuttled along with even more frenzy than all the others, and the lucky possessor of the fastest pony was expected to make the biggest pile.

The first time Anemone and I dined out we made sure we need not start too early in view of the rate of speed of our steed. What we miscalculated was the fact that the mafoo might be oblivious of where he was going, but we realised it when we arrived three-quarters of an hour late, and found all the guests, except the hero of the hour, who had been specially invited to meet us, well on the way to losing their tempers, while the hero himself, with unruffled serenity, asserted that it was finer to retrieve defeat than to be successful at first. By way of demonstrating the fact we arrived half an hour early at the next dinner-party to which we were asked. After that we began to be able to judge of the idiosyncrasies of China ponies and their drivers, and knew how much time to allow.

The dinners in Shanghai were lengthy. A multiplicity of courses is the Chinese idea of a sumptuous banquet, and it is easier to yield to the theories of Chinese servants than to oppose them in any way. At one house, where the hospitality was lavish, the luncheon-party guests used to be still sipping their coffee when the callers arrived for afternoon tea, and before tea was finished it was highly probable that the dinner guests would come in to swell the throng.

It seemed rather the fashion in Shanghai for men to live in great style and then die, leaving their families destitute. It was said to be a necessity to keep up appearances, for otherwise people would know that the businesses were not prospering. We afterwards heard that some of the repasts which we par-

took of were provided at the expense of Chinese compradores, and we understood something of what the missionaries meant when they said it was easier to preach Christianity anywhere than in a treaty port. But of what happened behind the scenes we were spared much knowledge. All that came to our notice was the kindness we received in English-looking homes from charming cosmopolitan hosts and hostesses.

We had some surprises when we returned first calls. On one occasion we were startled by the announcement that "Mississi have one piecee bull chilo," and as we both had a horror of anything horned, we fled away without telling the boy to offer congratulations on the birth of a son and heir, thereby once more lowering ourselves in Chinese esteem.

The Bubbling Well Road was an annoyance to Anemone; both the well and the bubble were so insignificant that she considered it as absurd to name a long road after them, as it was for the China ponies to rush along that road at such a furious pace. Off the Bubbling Well Road was the Country Club, which opened its doors to the "military," though civilians had to wait years before gaining admittance to its select membership. We used to go there for tea-parties and dances, and what with numbers of private entertainments, most evenings were filled with gaiety of some sort.

The most original dances were known as the "Customs' Formal and Informal," and were held at the China Customs' Club. The *elite* of Shanghai attended in select parties as one does at a county ball. There were two sorts of China Customs' people—the indoor and outdoor Customs—so we were given to understand. Though the social distinction between them

was marked, all mingled at the Customs' Club dances, which were known by their respective titles, because evening dress was obligatory at the "formal," while at the "informal" it was optional. We knew several men in the China Customs who had come back from the interior, where they had been sent to live alone among Chinese in rooms decorated from floor to ceiling with Chinese characters. After several years of such existence a *slight* knowledge of the written language is said to be possible. We did not wonder that the Customs' dances were a little out of the common if in any way connected with the study of Chinese. The first we went to was a "formal." The evening dress was remarkable, to say the least. We saw one creation of red plush and mauve satin combined in alternate stripes. Another dress was of crimson serge; it was cut very low in the bodice; so if the material was not usual for evening wear, the wearer had done her best to make up for it by the style. The "outdoor Customs" took great pains with their dancing. One cavalier practised the waltz step in single blessedness. Another counted "one, two, three, one, two, three," conscientiously, as he pulled his partner round and round. He seemed to dance with the same lady all the evening, but evidently found her heavy, for when it came to the Highland schottische he suggested that they might as well dance the whole of it singly, and Anemone and I found them in opposite corners jumping round in a relieved way now that they were unencumbered by each other's weight.

That winter the Caledonians and the Saratoga Lancers were much in vogue at the Customs' Formals. We found them convenient for bestowing upon people with whom we did not wish to dance, for the chief feature of them seemed that one never saw one's own

partner after the first introductory bow, the consequent drawback being that the selectness of one's party did not now profit one in the least. I found myself perpetually confronted by a man with a shaggy head and a face like a sheep. "Are you complete?" he always asked me earnestly, and seemed rather hurt because I, having no notion what he intended, was never once able to make a suitable reply. Whenever Anemone paused at a loss as to the next figure she invariably found herself seized by a certain harbour-master who had been deafened by a cannon in the Chino-Japanese war. Consequently he was blandly unconscious of Anemone's protestations, and she found that there was no escape from him except by dancing most vigorously with somebody else. I grew to understand that a sudden disappearance of Anemone simply meant her temporary annihilation on the harbour-master's chest. In spite of such drawbacks the Customs' dances were very popular, and the representatives of the armed forces of Europe were most assiduous in attendance at them.

Anemone preferred to patronise private parties, but this meant making some return on our part, and so, in the middle of December, we decided to give a big "At Home." We gave Fido full directions in the morning, and early in the afternoon we went placidly up-stairs to dress. We descended again five minutes before the hour at which our guests were invited, and found Miss Wake engaged in turning out the room.

"As you seemed to be stopping topside, I thought I'd take the opportunity to give it a good cleaning," she vouchsafed as explanation, while Fido looked on meekly, having evidently not dared to interfere.

It was an awful moment, but we managed to keep our heads.

"Fetch chairs," cried Anemone; and we did not notice that the coolie brought them out of Herr von Fink's room.

I pushed the tables into their places, and Fido laid the tea things. Anemone helped Miss Wake put up the clean curtains, and then came a ring at the front door. In the passage we could hear the footsteps of the first arrival, and there lay the soiled curtains in a heap upon the floor.

"What shall I do with these?" I gasped.

"Throw them over the screen," said Miss Wake.

Over the screen they went—first the curtains, followed, with a terrific clatter, by the rods and the rings. The screen nearly fell over, but Anemone clutched it in time and saved a further catastrophe. Miss Wake and the coolie ran out at the door and nearly upset the first arrival, a tiny French naval officer, who stared at our heated countenances in considerable surprise. Soon after, every one appeared, and to judge by the noise and the laughing our party was an immense success.

"I hope von Fink hasn't come in. This would drive him distracted," Anemone whispered to me in the middle.

As a matter of fact, at that moment a fever-stricken man was wearily dressing, after which he left his apartment and found refuge in the room of his sick friend. We only knew this some evenings later, when Herr von Fink invited us to dine with him at the Astor House Hotel to hear the German Emperor's favourite naval band. The Count was also there, having recovered for the time being; and it was he who divulged the fact that von Fink had been suffering from malaria on the occasion of our "At Home." Herr von Fink admitted that he had been startled

out of sleep by seeing the coolie fetch all the chairs out of his room, and a minute afterwards he had been suddenly buried under a bundle of curtains, and only narrowly escaped being killed by a blow from a curtain-rod. His fever had apparently been much augmented by anxiety lest the screen should fall over, but now he made light of the whole matter, and was not best pleased with the Count for alluding to the episode.

"I am so glad that you should give parties in my private sitting-room," he said. "I am so little in it myself. I am glad it should be of some use."

"*Your* private sitting-room?" cried Anemone.

"*Your* private sitting-room!" I gasped.

"Yes, *my* private sitting-room," said Herr von Fink. "I have been so pleased all through to see you make use of it."

Once again Anemone and I understood that Miss Wake had been playing "Box and Cox" with the rooms. It took longer to enlighten Herr von Fink on the subject; and when he discovered that several men had been in the habit of taking their meals in his private apartment he registered a vow to give Miss Wake a piece of his mind. But this donation was not easy to offer, as Miss Wake suddenly vanished from the premises of Wan-Shao-Shan. "No have got. Have go out," was all the house boy vouchsafed in answer to inquiries; and it was Christmas time before she reappeared, trusting that "goodwill to all men" would obliterate delinquencies, I suppose.

Anemone was depressed about Christmas. It was the first she had spent so far from home. I hoped to rouse her spirits by giving her a present, which I did up in the dark, so that she should not see it, and then crept across the room to lay it on the table by her

bed. On the way I suddenly collided with her. She was evidently bound on the same errand, so we discreetly made no observations, but assumed that it was most natural for us both to be taking exercise in the dark.

We each found one solitary gift next morning ; and after thanking each other rapturously, we started out for the cathedral, where the Shanghai residents were hunting for their pews, which many of them occupied once a-year, and so had a little difficulty in finding them. We came back by the bund, and most of the vessels in the river, including some of the Chinese, were dressed in honour of Christmas Day. The British men - of - war were decorated with tiny Christmas-trees at the top of the masts, and on one "A Merry Christmas" was stretched in green - leaf letters from stem to stern.

Anemone did not think it merry at all, as she ate slices of turkey and plum-pudding at Wan-Shao-Shan. However, we had the paper-hunt to go to in the afternoon—the special big paper-hunt of the season,—and this year the China ponies had to test their powers beside Arabs and Walers and Indian country-breds. They were found wanting in many ways. A jump ten feet in width was the most they could attain to ; but they were much the best suited to the eccentricities of Chinese cross-country work, and were surest footed on the narrow stone bridges over the innumerable creeks that intersect the country round Shanghai. We were told that in most parts water was to be found six feet below the ground, and that on one occasion the steam-roller sank bodily through the bund into a swamp. It was therefore scarcely to be wondered that the Shanghai climate was damp, and that the Christmas

Day we spent there was like many Christmases in England—not frosty, but cold, in a moist, penetrating way.

We had a long cross-country walk. In every direction the scenery was flat. The creeks were hidden till one came up close; and here and there one saw junks, with full sails spread, apparently travelling through the cotton-fields. Everywhere the ground was dotted with grass or gravel mounds—the obtrusive graves of defunct Chinese. North, south, east, and west, China parades the fact of being a vast cemetery. The mounds are levelled at a change of dynasty; and this being the case one sees a reason for no dynasty having ever lasted very, very long. Judging by the appearance of the country round Shanghai, Anemone thought it high time for the Manchus to end their rule.

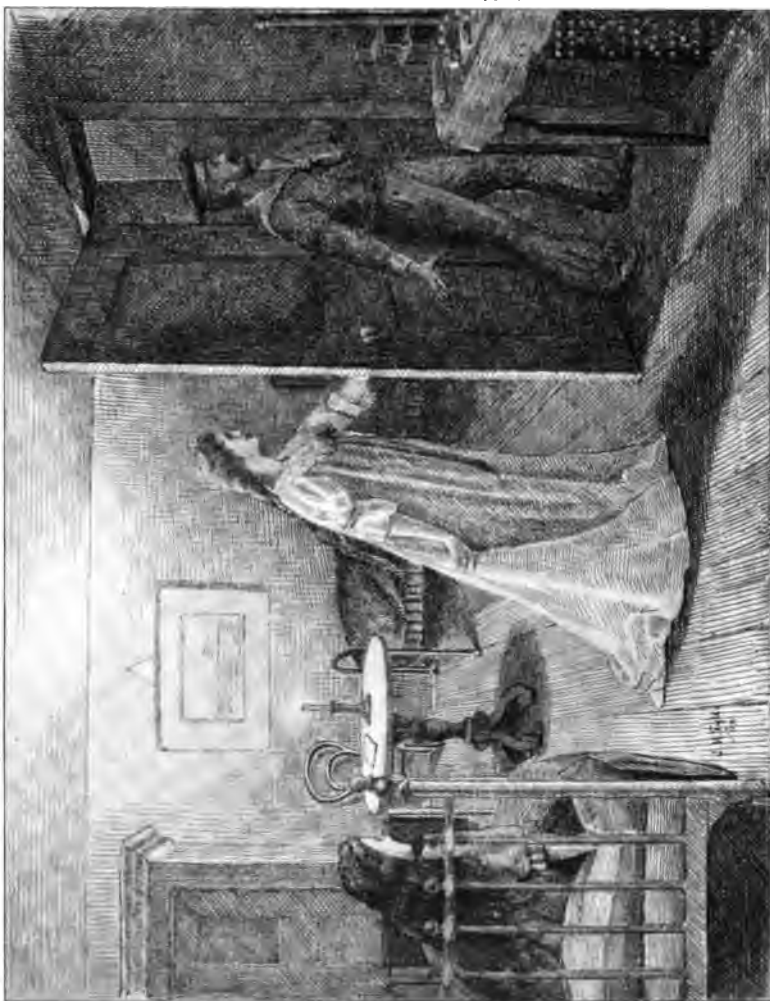
Quite a large crowd of Chinese as well as Europeans assembled to see the finish of the paper-hunt. Women and children came hurrying up, and screamed with laughter whenever any one was thrown or a horse or pony jibbed at the last jump. When all was over we were invited to a special tea-party at a charming house beyond the village of Jessfield, and after it Anemone and I had a second tea in an officer's hut in the Baluchi Camp. It was dark by the time the rickshaw coolies raced home with us. The air had grown sharper; there was a frosty look about the stars and the clear new moon. In the Maloo the Chinese still toiled, and the red lantern light flickered on their bulky forms. They wear no underclothing as a rule, but in the winter pad their outer garments with cotton-wool and use their coat sleeves as muffs.

In Wan-Shao-Shan the "gentlemen boarders" were

absent. We only met Miss Wake creeping on tiptoe through the house. Since her reappearance her manner had been more strange than usual. We had caught her listening at doors, and she made no secret of reading our correspondence. We no longer wondered how she came to know the private histories of so many people in Shanghai. All the same, her thin white face was so pathetic that we showed our indignation by pressing her to come and talk to us that Christmas night. She consented, and gave us an outline of her career, and told us how a faithful adorer had pursued her from Scotland to China,—in fact, whatever fresh place she went to, whenever she looked out of the window—there he was! By dint of doing without fresh air she thought she had at last given him the slip.

“Good thing too,” she said. “I haven’t the patience to sit down to marriage. I couldn’t be bothered. Life’s too short. I haven’t the time.”

This reminded her that the evening was waning, and with it all sorts of opportunities for investigating the private affairs of the “gentlemen boarders,” who would probably stay out late. So she slipped noiselessly out of our room and wriggled along the passage, keeping close to the wall, and looking more like a phantom than a living being, while overhead we heard hobbling footsteps and the “tap, tap, tap” of a stick. We knew it was only a back-stair lodger—one of a mysterious little company who were quartered in an upper region, and whom Miss Wake never allowed in and out the front way. Having decided that Miss Wake was mad, we went on to discuss apparitions, as Anemone thought there was no fear of thieves, our room was hidden away so far down the passage, and what with all the



ANEMONE MOST POLITELY HELD THE DOOR OPEN.

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furniture in it she was sure there would not be a corner available for any intruder more substantial than a ghost. If any of the latter arrived I said their visit that evening would be opportune, as I felt "fey" and in the mood to see spirits; and after Anemone had fallen asleep I lay awake till the last red spark in the fire had faded and the room was left totally dark. Then I slept too, and knew nothing till I heard Anemone asking, "What *do* you want? What *do* you want?" Then in the most matter-of-fact tone of voice, as though she were announcing the presence of a mosquito or beetle, she called to me, "Light the candle, will you, Griselda; there's a sailor in the room!"

I opened startled eyes to see a tall bluejacket move from Anemone's bedside and take up his position at the foot of mine. He held a lighted match in his hand, and as it burnt down he dropped it and struck another and held it up. He wore no cap, so one could not tell which was his ship. He looked quite young, and his face was very pale. His eyes were wide open, and stared straight in front of him. Every now and then he gave a little moan.

"Leave the room at once!" I commanded, and Anemone jumped out of bed and most politely held the door open for him.

The sailor turned round obediently and walked straight out of the room. Anemone shut the door, got back into bed, and fell asleep immediately. The bluejacket paced up and down the passage; I could hear his steady footsteps. Then a cane-chair creaked, and I knew that he had sat down opposite our door. It did not seem quite proper to leave him there, I thought; so I put on my opera-cloak and rang for

the China boy. When I heard him run down-stairs I joined him outside. The sailor sat in the chair with his legs stretched out in front of him; his arms hung limply beside him; his eyes remained fixed and staring, and every now and then he repeated his little moan.

The house boy interviewed him politely. "You belong Inglis? You belong sailor man? Think more better makee sleepee ship side."

He whispered to me that he thought he "belong tipsy man," but I did not agree. There was no appearance of drink about this mysterious visitor, who suddenly rose to his feet and walked steadily along the passage, down two long flights of stairs, and out at the front door. I went back to bed; and in the morning Anemone and I wondered whether we had both had the same strange dream, especially as we could not find a single match-end on the floor.

But before we were dressed Miss Wake knocked at our door. "What is this I hear about a sailor in your room?" she asked severely, evidently thinking it wise to forestall our complaint.

"What indeed, Miss Wake?" we inquired; but neither Miss Wake nor anybody else could offer any explanation about our midnight visitor. The Viking acknowledged at tiffin that he had come in last and had forgotten to bolt the passage door. He had always posed as a great protector of "ze ladees," but now he confessed that when he heard footsteps in the night he had done nothing more than lock himself into his room. He apparently did not think it worth while to run any risks, as he had grown very annoyed with us lately, owing to our preferring Mr Septimus Bull's sage observations to his witticisms, while any

interest we showed in Robert the Bruce enraged him beyond words. He now cut me altogether, and his bow to Anemone consisted of a faint flicker of his eyelids. He hurried through his meals, and before the rest of us had half done he waddled out of the room, his plump little body quivering with rage. He went to Miss Wake for commiseration evidently, for one day she suggested that we had better leave.

"This house," she said, "is more suited to gentlemen than ladies. Before, I had everything my own way. Since you came, I don't seem able to call a corner my own. It seems to me I'll lose possession of my soul and body soon."

"*You* answer her," said Anemone, retiring to the sofa and, as usual, leaving me the unpleasant work.

As it happened, we had just heard from Benjamin that he saw no reason why we should not be in Peking, so we had planned going there, *via* Shan-hai-kwan, under the escort of Robert the Bruce, who was going north. He had already lent us his revolver to familiarise us with its use, for he thought we might need one, as the railway from Shan-hai-kwan was guarded by Cossacks at that time. Even the C.R.E. had entered into our plan, and suggested that we could pad our clothes with cotton-wool and paper to preserve us from the cold, and wear our opera-cloaks over our winter coats and attach portable stoves all round. He only stipulated that, in return for his assistance, he should be allowed to snapshot us when ready dressed in our travelling costumes. Herr von Fink had grown gloomier than ever, and could only think of his last duel ever since our first suggestion of reaching Peking by the Shan-hai-kwan route. Full of these ideas we felt half way there already, and, in consequence, were perfectly ready to leave Wan-Shao-

Shan, as Miss Wake suggested, but I took the opportunity to deliver a short treatise upon the subject of her perusal of our letters and other transgressions of that sort. She evidently thought poor Fido had been a tale-bearer, for we overheard her threatening him most violently. "Ah!" she said. "My pay you bamboo chow chow"—that is, "I will give you a beating," or, more literally, "stick food."

This made us more indignant, for Fido seemed to be living up to his appellation and volunteered to accompany us to the north. His real name was Chi-sai, but Anemone said "Fido" was altogether so suitable, as it applied to the "dog theory" of Chinese servants so prevalent among Shanghai ladies—namely, that a China boy is of no more account than a dog in the room,—a notion that must considerably astonish the Celestials, whose ideas of decorum will not admit of a man and woman even touching hands.

With Fido ready to accompany us every detail seemed in order for starting by the next steamer, and we cheerfully agreed to give up our room at once. The Viking was very relieved, and gave out that he would take his meals in his bedroom till "ze ladees" had gone. One item, however, we had quite forgotten. It happened to be important, as it was the cost of our steamer tickets. When we went to the office to take them we found that the sum demanded was not in our possession, and we would have to wait, at any rate, until our next remittance reached us from home.

This blow was so unexpected that we hardly knew how to bear up under our disappointment. It would be wretched to watch Robert the Bruce start without us. We felt discontented with ourselves, our circumstances, and our affairs in general. We went to a

chemist's to buy some salts of lemon,—it was only to remove an ink-stain ; but our looks were so gloomy that the shopman hesitated to supply us. He evidently thought suicide was in contemplation, and only grew easier in his mind when Anemone made a further purchase of barley-sugar and acid-drops.

We were certainly in a dilemma, for our room was probably let over our heads. The only thought that cheered us was that, if we could manage to remain on in it, the Viking would either have to eat humble-pie or continue indefinitely to take his meals in his bedroom.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHANGHAI.

ALTHOUGH Miss Wake preferred to deal with men rather than women, it was simply because of the respect she felt for the capabilities of her own sex.

"Men," she said, "have had the management of the world for generations. What have they to show for it? Muddle! Nothing but muddle, so far as I can see."

We were therefore not altogether surprised when she made up her difference with us most amicably and quite unconcernedly left the Viking in the lurch. In spite of our unrighteous exultation we really felt concerned.

"What about his meals?" we asked.

"Let him chow in his bedroom. He's a man," she said.

The Viking used to hum and sing as he passed our door to show how much he enjoyed tiffin in his self-inflicted banishment. Anemone used to sing too, to show how happy we were and unconcerned. I thought this undignified, but Anemone said no amount of dignity could compensate on those occasions for the satisfaction of bursting into song.

We had the prospect of two or three months more in Shanghai, and already we had invitations for every

evening. The parties were not to take place as it happened, for the news reached us of the passing of the great Queen Empress, and eighty-two guns boomed from the men-of-war on the river to tell us that Queen Victoria lay dead ; while, like an echo, came the salvo of eighty-two guns from the vessels at the mouth of the Yangtse, followed by the royal salute of twenty-one guns as the mouthpieces of war acclaimed the accession of King Edward, the Peace-maker.

The day on which the commemorative services were held was bitterly cold, for an icy wind swept across Shanghai, direct from the Gobi desert. We had to wait outside the cathedral during the first service, which was only for the soldiers and sailors. At the close, as they marched out, headed by the principal British and foreign officers, the "last post" was sounded, and the bagpipes Queen Victoria loved so well were skirled by her Indian warriors. A second service was held for civilians and volunteers, and Anemone and I went to our places in the pews reserved for the ladies of the Brigade and the Consulate. All the Consuls were present in full uniform, and the good Viceroy, Liu Kun yi, and his suite were in attendance. Bishop Moule took the service, and among the clergy were several missionaries with their queues tucked under their cassocks. As they slowly passed out to the stately rhythm of Chopin's Funeral March it was strange to realise that the great Victorian era was ended, and that in the unseen world the commendation had surely been passed, "Well done! thou good and faithful servant!"

Although the gaieties were at an end there was still plenty to be seen and done in Shanghai. There were reviews of Shanghai's defenders, for instance ; the Germans, manœuvring in their wonderful way,

so that instead of individual units one seemed to watch one united mass of mechanism; the British Indian troops, some very smart at drill, others less so, all picturesque in their different coloured uniforms. Then there were Shanghai's own particular defenders, too—the Shanghai Light Horse and the Volunteers, all of whom are needed at times like that of the Boxer scare, when the rising of the people of the Yangtse Valley was only prevented by the wise and firm behaviour of Chang Chih Tung and Liu Kun yi, the Viceroy of Hankow and Nanking. Shanghai had defenders of another sort that hardly appealed to the European community,—these were the Chinese troops themselves, the soldiers looking like ordinary coolies, except that they wore a badge to distinguish them. Yet they were treated quite seriously. Li Hung Chang had come in state to review them, and the men had had an energetic day, as they had to double backwards and forwards from point to point to be reviewed over and over again until Li Hung Chang had inspected the full numbers. It was a convenient method, as it saved enlisting more men, and the commanding officers could appropriate the pay of the phantom columns.

It seems impossible to avoid aspersions upon the practice of the Chinese official classes, though their system of drawing salaries is none the less equitable because it is unlike western methods. Out of the revenue which they draw by fees and taxation the officials pay through the officers above them a fixed sum into the Imperial exchequer, and the balance forms their own income. It is only when they augment this balance by unfair means that they can be accused of corruption. The people whose innumerable guilds give them wonderful facility for

co-operation, do not allow official exactions beyond a certain point, and, speaking generally, the Chinese are said to be taxed less than any other nation. In modern days there are still followers to be found of the high examples set by the great judges Pao and Lan Lu-chow. Chang Chih Tung, for instance, time-server though he be called, is said to remain a poor man in spite of every opportunity for accumulating riches. Yet the attainment of the Confucian ideal does not seem generally reached. The sage renounced his high position in the state of Lu when the King no longer obeyed his maxims. He roamed the country for thirteen years, refusing office at all the courts because the rulers were not prepared to carry out his principles. He said, "Riches and honour acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud." Mencius, the great philosopher, who lived about a hundred years later than Confucius, and whose teachings are included in the Chinese classics, had the same character for integrity. With such principles as the basis of national thought it is not surprising that the commercial honesty of the Chinese has become far-famed. In mercantile transactions no written agreement, no witnesses are needed; the Chinaman's word is his bond. At the same time lying and thieving are only too general. Even Confucius, accredited sinless, was by no means always exact in regard to truth. The best known story of his failing in this respect seems characteristic of the Chinese. It has often been repeated how Confucius sent out word that he was ill in order to avoid receiving an unpleasant visitor. The next moment, before the caller was out of ear-shot, he played upon his harpsichord to give him a more correct idea of why admittance had been refused. In this way Con-

fucius may be said to have combined politeness and honesty; and his example in this, at any rate, is often followed by his countrymen, to the confusion of the western point of view, according to which his behaviour was rude as well as untruthful. What we had felt with the Japanese was total ignorance as to whether they were going to cheat or to be honest. But we found that when a Chinese had no intention of being trustworthy, like Confucius he paraded his deception. In consequence, Anemone agreed with me that one felt surer of what was before one in all dealings with the Celestials. If one cannot avoid being cheated, it is, at any rate, some safeguard to be forewarned.

There is something wonderfully reliable about the Chinese. The difficulties of their language strengthen their memories to such an extent that it seems a physical impossibility for them to forget anything. In fact, this endowment has become a vice retarding the progress of the nation, but it makes it easy to understand how soon one finds one is managed by instead of managing a Chinese servant. Fido did not seem to us a very high moral character. We strongly suspected him of smoking opium. In a fit of caution one day we decided to lock up our money and trinkets, and hide our keys from him. The sequel to this forethought was that, when one of the officers arrived to escort us on a bicycling expedition, Anemone was deprived of a brooch on which, she assured me, her whole bicycling costume depended, as we could neither of us remember where we had put the keys. After keeping our long-suffering friend waiting for half an hour we had at last to appeal to Fido, who made straight for the hiding-place. Thereupon we humbly relinquished everything into

his keeping, and let him assume the authority suited to his antique nationality.

The coolie was our great stand-by at Wan-Shao-Shan. We went to him for advice as to a father, and he was always ready to be our monitor. He was so particular about us that it was almost a drawback. There were all sorts of spectacles that we never beheld owing to his ideas of propriety. For instance, we wanted to see an opium den. "Get your boy to take you," we were advised by an Englishman we met. Accordingly one afternoon we summoned Fido.

"Wanchee go see opium den," we said.

Fido blushed scarlet, shuffled his feet, and looked the picture of embarrassment.

"Sh! Sh! Makee call coolie," he said, and promptly fetched that mild-faced worthy, who was a good deal older, and more a man of the world.

"What wanchee?" asked the coolie benignly.

"Wanchee go see opium den," we repeated meekly.

"No belong plover," said the coolie so decidedly that we dared not offer one remonstrance, especially as Fido was by this time hiding his blushes behind the door.

It was the coolie who made us understand the custom of giving presents at the time of the Chinese New Year. He mentioned the fact, not by way of asking anything for himself, but as being grieved and a little shocked that our education had been so faulty as to make it necessary for him to have to instruct us in such a minor detail. Fido had a holiday for the occasion, and came back inebriated. It was our turn to express disgusted horror, and the coolie quite agreed with our sentiments. He did not think it worth while to reprimand Fido, however, as he said there was not a chance of his being drunk

again for another year. He certainly was the one and only Celestial whom we ever saw lost to self-respect in that way.

Dignity is an essential of the Chinese. Even the "washeeman" who directed his accounts to "Mrs Twowomen," though he could have made a fortune on the comic stage, was filled with an indescribable dignity that never deserted him. The stateliness of a superior Chinese, as he swaggers down the street in costly brocades, is unattainable by any barbarian from the West, in his skimpy clothes that the Chinese consider immodest, outlining as they do the whole shape of the figure. Self-esteem may almost be said to be a Chinese characteristic free from qualifications. The best ladies' tailor in Shanghai thought himself equal to Paquin, and did not hesitate to pick and choose among his customers, working only for those whom he thought would do him credit. Anemone declined to be judged by him like a horse, as she expressed it, and patronised a humbler individual. He did not work for her for long, as they had some disagreement over payment. Anemone, wishing to be just, finally consented to give him the extra sum he demanded, but because he had not been paid at once, he now declined to take it. He must "save his face,"—that was even more important than saving the money. He must also discontinue his services to Anemone. "My too muchee 'flaid," he said reproachfully.

It did not break Anemone's heart, more especially as we had found a Chinese woman to come and work for us. We never understood her real social status. She seemed a most lady-like person. Her childhood had apparently been passed among harrowing scenes of bloodshed and revolution. She had been one of

the thousands of victims of the great Taiping rebellion, for though she had come to no bodily harm she had lost her home and her rich, well-born relations. Her adopted parents unbound her feet and allowed them to grow, and in consequence she had only been able to make an inferior marriage. She bemoaned her large feet a great deal, and made them responsible for most of her misfortunes. If one adopts the real Celestial point of view, it is possible to understand that a tottery woman may appear very charming if one likens her to a lily swaying on its stem, as she is described by Chinese writers. Until the system has been put a stop to as a whole, no doubt individual women will continue to deplore the possession of reliable "understandings."

Our sempstress seemed to be troubled by calamities of all sorts. She had a bad son, who was a great grief to her; in fact, she said she would take poison were it not that she also had a good son. She professed to see a strong likeness between him and Anemone.

"Belong all same face my good son; only my son more eyebrow," she said, inspecting my sister-in-law.

Anemone's sense of politeness made her try to look flattered, but the attempt was quite a failure, though I assured her the good son was certain to be nice-looking if he took after his mother. Altogether we admired the Chinese women. Many have fair complexions and good features; and most are tall, with fine upright figures, which, however, are sometimes bound in to make them conform more to Celestial ideas of propriety.

A Chinese woman lays claim to no honour through the mere fact of being married. That agitating episode in her career chiefly involves leaving a home,

where she may or may not have been welcomed, for the probably unpleasant society of a mother-in-law, and perhaps sisters-in-law, who, if the family she has entered be a poor one, will get all the work they can out of her. It is only when she has produced a son, as a guarantor of the continuance of ancestral worship, that she gains a personal status. Of course there are exceptions. There are love-stories in China as elsewhere, and all Chinese women are not by any means under subjection. Many a portly Celestial trembles before his "mean ones of the inner apartments." The tongue may be called very appropriately "a fire" in the mouths of many Chinese women, but their powers of eloquence are not only used for reviling. There are helpmates to be found in China who have a contempt for "foleign women," because they consider that they so often "no savvee husbands' pidgin." Although the Empress who reigned during the Han dynasty is the only legitimate female sovereign of Chinese history, there have been other regents before Yehonala who usurped the administrative powers,—such, for instance, as the Empress Wu in the Tang dynasty, who is said to have "ruled with a rod of iron."

Our work-woman, we were sure, was not a managing woman, but her amiability did not seem to have profited her. When we questioned her about her husband she told us that she was "an autumn fan."

"Summer makee go, fan no more wanchee," she said.

This explanation did not help us much ; and we only found out afterwards, in Mr Giles's most interesting book, 'Historic China,' the origin of this expression, which implies a neglected wife. A certain favourite of Cheng Ti, who reigned B.C. 32-36, sent the Emperor

a fan, with a poem inscribed on one side in which she bewailed the fact that with the "autumn chills" the poor fan would be cast on one side. This, she felt, was to be her own fate, for while her love was faithful, being born of the heart and brain, the Emperor's was fleeting, being like many another man's mere passing lust of the eye.

In spite of her troubles our work-woman was very sprightly. She considered herself a great medical authority, and though we were both in rude health, she insisted on prescribing the most unsavoury medicines. Pigs' hind feet she looked upon as a certain cure for all manner of maladies; and she had an egg solution warranted to remove all evils if used as a liniment. She said she had cured her husband of something by it. The bad in him had gone out into it; and she proved the fact to her own satisfaction by asserting that a dog which had happened to eat the solution afterwards got mange and promptly died.

Judging by the condition of most of the dogs and cats which prowl over China, the dog was likely to have had mange in any case. These poor animals' diet consists of the leavings of the human beings, and the state of their figures proves the intense economy of the Chinese. However pitiable their condition, no one puts an end to their miseries, for Buddha forbade his followers to take life. So a cat may be tied to a tree to die in slow torture by way of fulfilling the commands of the pitiful Sakyamuni, whose heart yearned over the dumb creation as much as over humanity, and who, according to legend, even comforted the devil in distress.

The three doctrines of China — Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism—had brought no ray of real

happiness into the sad heart of the poor woman who worked for us. The beautiful maxims of Confucius and Mencius belonged to the "Church of the Learned"—the Chinese term for Confucianism. She did not know much about them, and systems of philosophy, however excellent, have a nasty habit of failing at critical moments. Of the abstruse teaching of the philosopher Lao-tse, who lived just before the time of Confucius, she probably knew a great deal less, though Lao-tse dealt with wider issues than his compatriot, and, in consequence, his teachings are a mightier force to-day, for though they have been so corrupted in China, the Shên-tao, or "Correct Way," of Lao-tse is believed to be the origin of the Shinto creed, and the old Taoist classic, the Tao-têh King, contains just the helpful, beautiful maxims that one could imagine as the indirect inspiration of such national conduct as that of the Japanese. Lao-tse was a preacher of the Simple Life, and the Tao-têh King might be an appropriate antidote for modern restlessness and self-advertisement. The chief speculation is upon the "Tao"—the "Way," or the "Principle of Nature," which permeates the whole universe, yet is described as "non-existent," though on and by it all things "depend and are produced." Chuang-tse, who expounded the "Doctrine of the Tao," gave the "Rest in Inaction" as the means of becoming "One with the Infinite." Though the "Tao" is said to have existed before God, yet from it seems to have come the idea of a Supreme Being, worshipped as Shang-ti, to whom the superintendence of the world is given, though he is apparently ranked below the "Three Pure Ones," Lao-tse himself being one of the Taoist Trinity. The modern religion is said to bear little analogy to the

teachings of the old-world philosopher. The idea of an immortal soul, which appears to have belonged to it originally, soon degenerated into a search for the elixir of life. A ritual was borrowed from the Buddhist religion, and nowadays the Chinese call in the priests of either order indiscriminately to exorcise demons and practise magic rites.

We wondered that our sempstress was not consoled by the thought of Kwannon, or Kwan-yin as the Chinese name the merciful Goddess of Buddhism. There is Amida, too—the Buddha of “Boundless Light”—whose very name sounds so attractive. His is the western paradise, paved with gold, silver, crystal, and pearls—a happy land filled with tangible joys.

Instead of contemplating paradise, our Chinese friend seemed much more occupied by the horrible hells of the religion, and spent a good deal of time, she confessed, gazing at their tortures as depicted in one of the temples. Demons were a constant terror to her, too, as they seem to be all over China. The walls built before entrances are for the purpose of stopping the incoming of devils who, fortunately, walk straight and cannot go round corners, which perhaps accounts for the “way of the transgressors” who fly before them being described as “crooked.” Besides genuine demons, the Chinese consider themselves haunted by the ghosts of the dead, and many men and women are said to have committed suicide simply in the hope of being able to revenge themselves upon their enemies after death. A joss is attached to everything—the objects of nature, the parts of the body, and almost every known condition and employment. How far these are genuinely believed in by the uneducated it would be hard to

tell. The upper classes, the proud Confucianists, are said to be mainly atheistic, though they do not hesitate to play upon the superstitions of the lower orders. The Emperor sacrifices to Heaven, and all classes worship the spirits of their ancestors, for these the sceptical "Church of the Learned" acknowledges as the only beings from whom the living race may be certain of having sprung.

Whatever ideas cultured Chinese may hold upon the hell of the after life, they have not yet done away with the hells of their own country. Neither Anemone nor I penetrated into a prison, but several of our own friends had been eye-witnesses of the horrors of their fearful interiors, where the filth is so appalling that a great worm is bred which burrows under the skin and devours the flesh. Culprits are said sometimes to be imprisoned for years before being brought up for trial, and plaintiffs and witnesses are also placed under detention to ensure their presence when required. We saw some prisoners in Shanghai walking about with their warders; they looked well and comfortable, although they wore cangues (wooden collars), but these seemed hardly to inconvenience them.

The penal code of China is said to be a great deal more lenient than is generally supposed. Cangues, manacles, and iron chains are worn as punishments, and flogging with a bamboo is a very frequent corrective. The only instruments of torture said to be included in the penal code are those for squeezing the fingers and compressing the ankle-bones.¹

We wished to give the Chinese the benefit of every doubt, and to incline to the opinion of those writers who maintain that "torture, though not

¹ See 'Historic China,' by H. Giles, p. 125.

unknown in China, exists there practically in name alone." As it happened, however, among our Shanghai acquaintances was an officer who, during the year 1899, had reigned supreme over a district in the Kwang Tung Province, which came under British auspices for a short period, and then, in accordance with orders from England, was once more left to its fate, notwithstanding the disappointment of some of the more enlightened Chinese. This officer had every opportunity for making most exact investigations, and what we heard from him was not encouraging to belief in Chinese clemency. He had seen some dozen pirates put to death by strangulation. Their heads were tied in a line, and it was brutally arranged that each man before dying should have a full view of the sufferings that were just about to be his. Our friend used to attend the court-house to hear the cases, and happened to notice a basket which was carried in every day and then taken away again. He observed movements inside the basket, and realised that it was filled with some shapeless, squirming thing.

"What is in there?" he inquired.

"A man," he was told. "A man who has two bones broken every day."

He found it was actually so. The miserable creature, now in his death-throes, had been maltreated out of all semblance of humanity.

In spite of the way in which the people co-operate and relations assist each other, there is, in general, utter callousness to suffering among the Chinese. They had rather see men die in front of them than incur ill-luck by helping them. We knew personally of cases in which Chinese of higher

class than the coolies had watched the struggles of drowning men with the greatest amusement. It is considered bad joss to save any one from drowning, so they would not stir a finger to give assistance, and thoroughly enjoyed what they considered the intense humour of the episode.

Custom seems at the root of many of the contradictory practices of the people. Old age has more respect shown it, generally speaking, than in Europe, for it is the custom to reverence age, just as it is the custom not to save people from drowning. It is customary to be law-abiding for the most part, and the slums of Chinese cities are said to be safer for life and property than the slums of European and American towns; yet, in spite of their wonderful classic literature, the Chinese still need to learn to regulate their actions by the law of love. And was it not for the sake of love, and to teach them love, that Shanghai was thronged that winter by that white-faced company in Chinese dress with queues hanging down their backs?

Poor missionaries—so much abused! Even then—after the untold miseries many had suffered—we heard them inveighed against as living in the lap of luxury. All one could say was that, judging by the pale, pinched faces, luxury seemed to have a very unusual effect. And the same people who object to all comforts for missionaries are generally the ones who would be the first to denounce asceticism as ridiculous nonsense, and quite unnecessary to Christianity, certainly in their own case; just as the people who bring up the argument about the heathen at home are not, upon inquiry, usually found to be interesting themselves about a single

member of this last-mentioned community. After all, the opinion of the multitude is not of much consequence, as it is never the multitude that shapes the world's history. That is done by those units that arise and remove the mountains, and so make a way along which the multitude afterwards follows with great complacency. Besides, if the attempt to regenerate the Chinese be futile, what can one call many of the objections that are brought up against it? One we heard was a complaint that the women missionaries so often let a red flannel petticoat show below their Chinese costume. Certainly we quite agreed that if any one undertakes to proclaim what we believe to be the nearest revealed truth of the Almighty Creator of the incomprehensible Universe, she should assuredly study dignity in all things—even red flannel petticoats. But it happened to be our fortune to meet one of the most remarkable and attractive women we had ever seen among the ranks of the missionaries,—one who had taken many earthly possessions and laid them, so to speak, at the Apostles' feet. She taught us to realise the truth of St Peter's remark about "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," which, up till then, we had rather associated with dowdy looks and hair strained back from the forehead. Now we agreed that St Peter's recipe, combined with plenty of cold water, fresh air, and physical exercises every morning, would bring about a vast improvement in women's looks.

From this missionary we heard of actualities—of real Chinese, such as the late Pastor Hsi, an exclusive Confucian scholar, whose life after his conversion was of more use to his generation than the combined existences of hundreds of the nominal

Christians of Europe, though, in his early days, when only influenced by the Confucian classics, he had, in Chinese fashion, been stolidly indifferent to all misfortunes that did not personally inconvenience him.

"And will you ever become missionaries?" this missionary asked.

"No," we said; "there seems no prospect of it."

"Oh! How sorry I am for you," she exclaimed, showing her own aspect of a life in which the self-sacrifice was as nothing compared with the stupendous object of hastening

". . . the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters
cover the sea!"

CHAPTER XXV.

SHANGHAI, AND JOURNEY VIA CHIFU TO TAKU.

"If China is a conservative country, Shanghai can't be in China." This was Anemone's opinion one morning when she had been "passed along" from department to department in a shop in the Nanking Road. "I might as well have studied Far Cathay at Marshall and Snelgrove's as here," she complained, as she was interrogated across the counter as to her requirements in gloves.

I acquiesced as to the Shanghai foreign settlement really not being China, considering that its administration is undertaken turn about by magistrates of the different foreign nationalities. Still, the Celestials are allowed "a finger in the pie," so to speak, and a Chinese magistrate occupies the bench in company with a European colleague, except in the special concession which the French acquired, over which a consul-general has control.

The Shanghai which, in 1842, was first opened to the trade of the world, consisted chiefly of some fisher huts on a swamp. Now fine buildings and prosperous business offices show that a hustle is possible even in a country regulated by ideas in vogue some 4000 or more years ago. From its beginning the place seems to have held the reputation of a busy trading

mart. The earlier settlement was on the banks of the present Su-chow Creek. When the Whang-poa became navigable another settlement was founded during the thirteenth century on the present site of Shanghai, and was converted into a walled city in 1544 as a protection against the Japanese raids which troubled the maritime provinces of China from the commencement of the Ming dynasty.

Beyond the French concession the walled city remains unchanged from the sixteenth century. Here the Chinese manage their own affairs, and it is said that a population of 130,000 is crowded into its area of a little over a mile in length and three-quarters of a mile in breadth, and into a small suburb on the water's edge outside. Consequently Shanghai walled city has much variety of dirt to offer nose and eyes, and Anemone and I thought we could sample China Proper there without going farther afield.

It was especially interesting just before the Chinese New Year, when the people are in such need of ready money, that the shopkeepers lower their prices, and bargain-lovers can enjoy themselves almost as much as if they were in London for the sales. They need not either exercise the same caution about pickpockets, judging by the way in which we saw the Chinese money carried through the streets in uncovered wooden boxes swung across coolies' shoulders, so that there would not have been the least difficulty in any one helping himself. It was certainly only copper cash—the native money, first said to have been coined about 200 B.C. Whole strings of it only amount to a modicum of a dollar, still "mony a mickle maks a muckle," especially at the epoch of paying bills. But none even of the many beggars that

crowded round us moved a finger towards the tempting hoard.

What annoyed Anemone was the fact that, instead of being absorbed in bargains, the whole populace centred its interest in us. Whichever way we moved we were surrounded by bleary-eyed old men and women, and children so padded out in their winter garments that if we accidentally tripped any over, we had to stop and pick them up or they would have been left sprawling on the cobble-stones as helpless as inverted tortoises. The sturdier people pushed past the others to inspect us. Their criticisms were certainly outspoken, and we fondly trusted polite. We hoped we served our generation as an object-lesson, for the attention we received was not without its drawback, as it involved inevitable contact with our neighbours' raiment in streets, some of which were so narrow that a sedan-chair could not have been squeezed through. This was trying when combined with the consciousness that the winter clothing had been put on once for good and all in the autumn, and would know no prospect of removal until the following spring. Its bulk added greatly to the difficulty of making way for the burden-bearers. These generally went at a trot, shouting to everybody to make room for them. Anemone and I made frantic efforts to do so, as the burdens often consisted of pails of dirty water that splashed about in the most reckless way.

The shops displayed very varied commodities. We fought shy of the grocers, where the blend of odours became more concentrated, and ducks, squashed flat out of all recognition, hung in rows above chickens that had experienced interment, and assortments of decomposed fish. In some booths hung hundreds of tiny cages full of canaries, perhaps waiting for some

devout Buddhist to buy them and set them free. Had we come out better provided with smelling-salts we might have lingered for hours in some of the shops, fingering the china, the embroideries, and the exquisite carvings in wood and ivory, that make one uncertain at which one should marvel most—the Chinese delicacy of finger-touch, or indomitable patience of brain. But then, as Anemone said, there is nothing a Chinese cannot achieve if he once makes up his mind.

We never succeeded in finding the image of the tutelary deity, nor the shrine of Su-Kwang-Ki, the Shanghai patriot, a pupil of Ricci, the Jesuit missionary, and now worshipped by his townsmen as an inspired sage. A great boat of blackened wood, said to be an object of much antiquity, was our principal discovery in the joss-house; but the crowd grew so dense that we moved on with it to the chief tea-house, a beautiful little building with curved roof tops and ornamented walls, standing in the middle of an odoriferous pond. In the autumn the water had been a brilliant green, from the moss and slime that covered it; now it was frozen over and the ice was a dingy grey. A little curved bridge connected the tea-house with the surrounding picturesque buildings, that would have looked lovely if only dirt had not been so much in evidence and the whole walled city in such need of a thorough scrubbing.

The crowd grew monotonous, so we beat a retreat into the mandarin's palace, where we found ourselves alone with a tottery caretaker inside high walls, where all was seclusion and peace. In the house there was prosaic glass to the windows, and the rooms had wooden chairs and tables with marble tops, where the mandarin and his companions used to sit and smoke their opium pipes. Narrow covered verandahs

wound round the house and led to other parts of the dwelling, and a little bridge crossing dry ground seemed a very unnecessary convenience till we understood that it had formerly spanned a tiny ornamental lake. Above it birds had sung in an aviary. The aviary remained, but the birds had vanished, like the mandarin and his "inner ones." The entire garden was a rockery, through which paths twisted with much eccentricity. Great stones and boulders had been piled upon each other till a high hill had been formed, on top of which stood a summer-house, with a fine view of roof-tops to enliven the small-footed ladies who toiled up the ascent. The roofs were certainly picturesque, unlike their European fellows. All were fantastically curved and peaked, and a huge carved serpent wriggled along a wall that enclosed another mandarin's residence. Between the boulders of this magnified rockery queer-shaped, stunted trees lifted bare branches that provided shade for the garden in summer, and we nomads from the outer world seemed to pace under the leafless twigs with the ghosts of those "inner ones" who had lived there perhaps as much caged in as the birds in the aviary.

The caretaker was not communicative, but he condescended to explain why Chinese roofs curve upwards at the edges.

"Suppose catchee good joss," he said, "no can makee fall out."

"But suppose catchee bad joss?" inquired Anemone anxiously.

The caretaker's face was a blank. This terrible alternative had evidently never suggested itself to the Celestial mind.

Even the floors in some of the houses in the north of China slope towards the middle, in the hope of

entrapping the good joss. Chinese superstitions are mostly so infantile that the race seems to have entered upon its second childhood in that respect the moment it emerged from its babyhood.

Noise appeared to be the chief feature of the New Year celebrations. In all the houses gongs were sounded and crackers fizzed. The people walked about in their best clothes to pay their congratulatory visits and prostrate themselves before the tablets of their ancestors. The river looked very gay, for the junks and sampans were decorated with flags and long paper streamers; and official buildings, such as the arsenal, the powder factory, and the guard-houses, were all adorned in the same skittish way. It was a time of holiday-making, feasting, and general rejoicing, and none of the Shanghai Chinese seemed the least depressed at their Emperor being a fugitive at Si-an-fu, and quite unable to usher in the new year propitiously by the winter solstice sacrifice at the Altar of Heaven, now desecrated, no doubt, in their opinion, by the proximity of barbarian troops. They were by no means ignorant of the Boxer rising, and during that summer of 1900 there had been some moments of great perturbation for the foreigners in Shanghai. Even during the following winter we found that, in spite of the proverbially meek and mild character of the natives of that vicinity, the looks of the villagers were not always friendly when we explored the neighbourhood. There was a tendency to shout "foreign devil" after us, and a man who once accompanied us was greeted by a shower of stones on his back. However, as they hit him and not me, they did not make much impression; and one afternoon, when Anemone was otherwise occupied, I betook myself to the same place—Loongwha, a village

outside of which was a pagoda, some joss-houses, and a monastery.

The journey there was uneventful. The passers-by looked amiable, and the children seemed devoutly disposed, for they hailed me with a chorus of "chin, chin joss." Grave-mounds were a constant adornment of the landscape; in the neighbourhood of smelly villages there were peaceful orchards, and in one field stood an isolated memorial arch. These monuments of learning or virtue are dotted over China in a very promiscuous way. They are often erected to the memory of scholars who distinguished themselves in the examinations, or to officials noted for their beneficent rule. Neither are women forgotten; and many of the archways are for the glorification of widows, considered virtuous because they did not marry a second time.

All I saw of the village of Loongwha was the bridge and the gateway that led to it. Beyond was the pagoda with seven peaked roofs, rising one above the other, each a little smaller than the one immediately below. To the right of the open square outside the village was the monastery and the joss-houses, the roofs of which were beautifully carved; on the top there were dragons and fishes; on the lower sides, figures of wrestling men. The grey cloisters looked quiet and peaceful, though one might with advantage have recommended baths and Pullar's dye-works to the priests who passed along them in very soiled and dingy winter robes.

In the central courtyard, outside the chief temple, stood an ancient bronze pagoda-shaped column. Beyond it, on low stone pillars, the Great Monad was engraved—the symbol of life, two divisions inside a circle, representing the male and female principles of

nature, further illustrated by rough drawings of the sun above the Monad and the moon below.

Inside the chief joss-house stood a large gilded Buddha, with a little stairway in front of him, other gilded figures beside him, and a fine ceiling above his head. Offerings of food were placed before the images, who evidently were expected to be rather limited in their meals. At the back of the temple a number of figures were represented "climbing the steep ascent of heaven" in a very literal way. Their goal was apparently "Amitabha," the Western Paradise, depicted on the top. In a corner was a huge ancient bell, the clang of which was, no doubt, as impressive as the bell's appearance; but a youth who constituted himself guide, though I disclaimed the attention, counselled me to take no liberties with it, as he said it "belong too muchee joss."

It might certainly have been overwhelming if the joss had been summoned in too great numbers, but in any case they were going to be invoked, as a service was about to be commenced. A priest was lighting thin red candles, and their pale light flickered upon a fine red silk banner beautifully embroidered in gold, while long streamers which hung from the ceiling threw meagre shadows that danced along the walls. Soon a priest came in and beat upon a fish-head made out of stained red wood. This office he continued without pausing for a moment, and the droning sound accompanied the sing-song chanting of other priests, while variations were made by the clanging of bronze bowls, and every now and then the tinkle of a bell, upon which the priests changed their attitudes, which altered according to the prayers.

The atmosphere was heavy with incense and burning joss-sticks and an indescribable odour imported by

the congregation, who gave me the full benefit of their attention, and seemed to ignore the fact that a service was going on. The priests were quite as much engaged in staring at me as the laymen, and my appearance was altogether too much for their gravity. They were picturesque in their grey and yellow vestments, so I contemplated them, while they shook with laughter at the sight of me. No high mass at St Peter's involved more bowing than was undertaken by a young-looking priest, who at length, on the tinkle of the bell, ascended by the little stairway to the great gilded Buddha, and returned with a tiny cup full of water, into which he regularly dipped a long-nailed third finger, doubling it as he drew it out under his thumb and little finger always in just the same way. He gazed at me the entire time, and grew more and more convulsed with amusement, and suddenly flicked some of the water straight into my face. Thereupon he marched outside and poured the libation over the engraving of the Great Monad, first flicking a few drops at a much-padded Chinese boy who was standing by undecided whether the priest or I were more worth staring at.

The clerical giggles were not awe-inspiring, so I wandered where I chose without asking permission, and made my way into another building with an ornamented ceiling and a galaxy of horrible images. Each had its own individuality in their rivalry of general hideousness. Bats were represented crawling over them in company with serpents that writhed and squirmed. Their eyes rolled or squinted in their green or red coloured faces, grotesque in their fear-some impotence. It was a relief to go outside and see the clear sky looking as usual, with the quaint pagoda perking its head above the peaked roof of the joss-

house, but the quiet of the cloister was disturbed by the Loongwha populace, who tramped after me whichever way I went. I had been glad to be chaperoned by them in the last temple, but the society of the 500 sages I wished to keep exclusively to myself. It was all in vain; even bribery could not quench curiosity, and a blue-garmented company escorted me into the temple, in which was a goddess and three other images enclosed in a beautiful gilded shrine. A carved and gilded screen was before it, and a fine lantern hung in front. Round all the sides of this building, and round four glass enclosures in the middle, were the images of the 500 Lohans, all with wonderful expressions, mostly benevolent. One drew a mask over his face; another stroked a long beard as he meditated; another had a blue beard and held a blue book in a most official manner; while a fourth gesticulated indignantly at a rat which sat at his feet.

It would have been pleasant to survey the tip of one's nose for hours in orthodox Buddhist meditation in such interesting company. The shades of those first early Buddhist disciples seemed to hover round their gilded representations, and the temple felt astir as though with faint glimmering perceptions of life that has been, is, and is to be. But the black-haired race has grown so uninspiringly materialistic that the Loongwha escort was not conducive to communion with the unseen world. Besides, the shadows were lengthening formidably. The eastern hemisphere was turning to the outer darkness, and it was unquestionably time to be going home.

Outside the joss-house I literally stumbled into royalty, for I bumped into a monarch—an autocrat, in fact, who looked as if he had stepped bodily out of

a fairy tale. He had a pointed beard—a not very usual adornment among the Celestials, who do not grow any hair on their faces until they are over forty, unless they happen to be grandfathers before they reach that age. His little eyes were bright and twinkling. His robes of majesty were coloured rags; they looked quite sumptuous as he propped himself against a rough fence as an appropriate contrast to his trappings of state. He was the King of the Beggars, and was said to have hoarded riches, but he benignly deigned to accept a humble contribution of cash from me.

The Beggars' Guild is by no means one of the most contemptible in China; its members have considerable power, as they can greatly inconvenience any Croesus unaddicted to charity. The monarch looked a robust old specimen; he probably traded exclusively in his subjects' infirmities. Practical in most things, the Chinese make every possible profit out of their deformities. One beggar we knew of, who had lost his feet through an accident, prevented the fact from escaping observation by crawling about with them conveniently strapped to his back.

No census of China could give one as realistic an idea of the population as the magical way in which a crowd accumulates. While I surveyed his majesty over a hundred people had assembled to stare their eyes out at me. It was a silent wondering audience that contemplated one as quietly as a drove of sleepy cows. But then one knows that cattle sometimes have a nasty way of lowering their heads and rushing at one, and very lately the same objectionable proceeding had been indulged in on the part of the Chinese. It was certainly not the psychological moment to haggle with the uninvited guide over

the sum demanded for his escort. He named a ridiculous amount, evidently thinking that I would realise that I was alone among the black-haired people and feel afraid. He seized my bicycle and obviously threatened me. This was enough to make loss of temper almost excusable, and I lost mine. Unlike a Japanese, he did not put me into the wrong by remaining amiable, but worked himself into a fury, so that it only remained to be seen which temper should be more forcible in getting its own way. The King of the Beggars looked on with dignified apathy. The gaping populace was highly entertained. Rather than miss a joke most Chinese would sacrifice their own belongings, and so, perhaps because the Loongwha residents wanted to amuse themselves at the guide's expense, they suddenly opened out and made a way for me. I indulged in no dawdling, but dragged the bicycle from the youth, mounted, and slipped through the throng before it had time to close up again. In my haste I charged some men on the footpath, who made most forcible observations, and next took a wrong turning and bicycled straight into the arsenal.

No anarchist at Tsarkoe Selo could have caused a greater commotion. Chinese soldiers swarmed out like ants on an ant-hill. They pulled me off the bicycle, and as they knew no English I could not explain that theirs was the last society into which I should have thrust myself intentionally. However, we came to an understanding, for one's conscious brain and its functions are, after all, very minor factors in most undertakings. Personal influence, at any rate, depends more upon our sub-conscious selves — that personality which, in one of their stories, the Chinese compare to a cloud, the colouring of which betrays

the disposition of the person to whom it is attached. Fortunately the meeting of my cloud with those of the native warriors led to a summer calm instead of a thunderstorm. They conducted me peaceably out of the arsenal, and set me on the right road for Miss Wake's abode.

The Whang-poa was certainly seen at its best in the soft, silvery sheen of the evening. Lights twinkled from rows of sampans, and a forest of junk masts stood out in sharp outline against a star-studded sky. Beyond came a blaze of brightness from the foreign warships, and the *Astrea* played a white search-light across the public gardens and the streets, where Chinese women travelled home crowded on wheel-barrows, and some drunken sailors were marched off by a Chinese policeman to the lock-up for the night.

Outside Wan-Shao-Shan Anemone was pacing the pavement in despair lest I should never return. She begged to accompany me on all subsequent expeditions, as she thought even personal danger would involve less stress of mind. So a few days later we walked together to the Point—a projection which juts out into the Whang-poa—and looked across the flat swampy country through which the Yangtse finishes its course. And everywhere, across swamps and cotton-fields, was the indescribable stir and fragrance that tells of the coming of spring. The air was soft. The sunshine was radiant. The time of the singing of birds had come. The news reached us that the ice had cleared from the mouth of the Pei-ho, and with the good tidings came the C.R.E. to say that a cargo-boat was to start for Taku immediately, and that we might have free passages in her, provided no officer turned up to claim the one and only cabin available.

Under the circumstances Anemone could have accomplished her preparations in five minutes. As it was, we had twelve hours in which to work hard. Just as our boxes were strapped and everything ready, the transport officer called to say that a marine officer had appropriated our cabin. The room at Wan-Shao-Shan was lost to us irremediably. Our farewells had been made. In her joy at departure Anemone had even wished the Viking good-bye. To stay on was impossible; and as our remittance from home had reached us, Anemone hurried out prepared to offer the whole of it to any firm that would charter a boat to take us north. The China merchants were despatching a vessel; Anemone took our tickets, and we slipped on board in the evening, with the coolie chaperoning us to the last moment, as Fido after all had proved faithless to his name.

Our cabin consisted of a corner of the saloon, screened off by an abbreviated curtain, behind which we were ushered by the mate, who told us to make the most of our slumbers while they were possible, as we were "timed to sail at the streak o' dawn." The last we saw of Shanghai were lights twinkling through the darkness. The last we heard was a lullaby droned by the coolies who piled the cargo on board.

The first we knew of the dawn was the way in which everything wobbled. Yet we did not appear to be making any headway, and, upon inquiry, found that the steamer was anchored at the mouth of the Yangtse, as the elements were in a turmoil.

"We should founder if we went out," said the captain in a tone of voice that implied that capsizing was in any case a contingency not to be ignored.

In the afternoon the vessel finally started, and the wobbling was exchanged for the most fearful pitching

and tossing that caused the old boat to creak and groan as though she were going to founder then and there. The passengers shouted for brandy; the ship's cat mewed for provisions; and Anemone and I prepared our minds for shipwreck, as our bodies incapacitated us from making preparations in regard to anything else.

It was not till next day that we crawled out from behind the curtain to the general assemblage of passengers, who were business men from Shanghai. They included two Britishers, a very wealthy Chinese compradore, and a foreign Count of fierce appearance, who contradicted everybody on board. They had to sleep in the saloon, as there was only one other cabin, which was monopolised by a Russian, who during the entire four and a half days' passage lay stretched like a corpse on his bunk, with his cap on his head and his booted feet sticking out into the saloon. He never changed his position, as we always had just the same view of his feet when we went below for meals. The atmosphere of tobacco and boots did not lend the saloon attraction, neither did the drinks which were clamoured for all day long. The first refreshment was brandy at six o'clock in the morning. After breakfast cocktails were enjoyed till tiffin, and champagne flowed freely during the course of the afternoon, especially if the compradore could be inveigled into the foc's'le, when his feet were chalked and he had to stand drinks all round. He paid the wine bill politely, but declined the proffered libations, and as he stalked about with Mongol dignity we did not wonder that he should look upon western civilisation as he then beheld it with a haughty disdain. We certainly would rather have applied to him in any difficulty than to any European on board, ex-

cept the red-cheeked Devonian captain, who insisted upon our spending the days in his deck-cabin, as the presence of so much liquid—salt water over the deck and champagne and cocktails under it—was rather damping for us. So Anemone and I sat in seclusion and watched the art of navigation which, when practised exclusively by Chinese sailors, filled us with apprehension, as the captain had been careful to explain that there were no trustworthy charts of the coasts of North China, and that a safe transit through the Yellow Sea depended chiefly upon guesswork.

After passing the Shantung Promontory the weather grew beautiful, as if to advertise the merits of Weihai-Wei as a health-resort. Beyond Liu-Kung-tau the hills on the mainland still snuggled under a snowy blanket, and white sea-gulls looked like snowflakes as they skimmed the crests of the rocking waves.

We spent some time at Chifu, where we landed and brought away confused memories of mission-stations, China silk, straw plaiting, vineyards, and a low wall running along the hill-tops, built by the Chinese as a barricade against the Japanese. On the wharf lounged a group of dirty coolies, fresh from the country, waiting to be shipped in company with a drove of cattle to Port Arthur, which place the Count could not mention without growing alarmingly apoplectic, as he recalled his one and only visit, when he assured us that his week's hotel bill had amounted to 1500 Mexican dollars, the equivalent of about £150. "So much," he said, bristling his moustaches, "for Port Arthur under Russian rule!"

The Count stayed so long on shore at Chifu that our departure was delayed considerably. When he was at last enticed on board, it was found that the chief, or rather the *only*, engineer was still away.

The captain said he could wait no longer, but Anemone implored him to do so, as she thought a steamer without an engineer was too much of an irregularity. The chief, on his return, was not the least disturbed about the risk he had run, and showed no gratitude to Anemone.

"You were nearly left behind," she observed.

"Verra nearly! Verra nearly!" he said most airily.

He offered to show us the engine-room; and it was only when he pressed us to explore the stoke-hole that we discovered that his calmness was due to inebriety.

In spite of his shortcomings the engines worked demurely, and next morning we noticed that the Muscovite feet no longer protruded into the saloon. This was a certain signal of voyaging being over, and on looking through the port-holes we found ourselves face to face with the Taku Forts.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TONGKU, TIENTSIN.

THERE was not much to be seen of the Taku Forts, and Anemone said it was no wonder, as their existence had been chiefly spent in undergoing bombardment,—not that their low mud walls could even give great evidence of that fact. They were first captured by the English in 1858, just before Lord Elgin signed the Treaty of Tientsin, by which a resident British Minister was appointed to the Chinese capital. The following year, when the envoy tried to make his way to Peking to ratify the treaty, the Taku Forts considered their innings had come, and effectually stopped his advance by an outburst of shot and shell.

In 1860 the French decided to combine with the British in teaching the Celestials how to ratify treaties; and the allied forces landed at Pehtang, eight miles north of the Pei-ho, and attacked the Taku Forts from the land side. Their defences were so unprepared for such tactless tactics that they soon fell into the enemies' hands; and the Allies continued the eventful march to Peking, which culminated in the burning of Yuen-ming-yuen, the summer palace, by way of chastising the Manchu authorities for the treacherous imprisonment of Sir Harry Parkes and others, and the establishment of the Tsung-Li Ko-

Kuo-Szu-Wu Yamen, or Office for the General Control of the Affairs of Every Country, by which title the Celestials understood to their own satisfaction that they undertook the management of the barbarians.

Having played their part in trying to prevent the establishment of foreign plenipotentiaries at Peking, it was natural that the Taku Forts should be involved in the attempted ejection of the Ministers. In fact, the capture of the forts in 1900 by the allied fleet was said to have finally determined the Manchus in their anti-foreign course of action.

We crossed the bar and swung round in the shallow river, till we lay alongside the wharf at Tongku; and everywhere across the flat, bare, brown country we saw the flags of the eight Allies dotted about in jealous ownership of the railway and godowns and mean little shanties, which, Anemone said, she would have been ashamed to own to in any case, much less to flaunt possession of by flags. If any place needed to be renowned through history for its number of bombardments, she considered that a sense of the fitting had been displayed in the selection of Taku.

"What else," she asked, "could you do with such a place except bombard it?"

Only, on the other hand, it was rather wasted energy, as there was nothing to bombard except some grave-mounds and mast-heads of junks, which seemed to rise indiscriminately out of the country, owing to the eccentric curves in the course of the Pei-ho.

We missed the morning train, and we had been specially cautioned not to arrive in Tientsin in the evening, so there was nothing for it but to wait on board till next day. Time did not hang heavily. There was actually too much to look at in the flag-dotted waste around Tongku. The mere variety of

costumes we were treated to surpassed anything seen at church-parade in the Park. The first arrival on board after our stoppage was a young Chinese in an American marine coat, gorgeous with medals, and the trophies of martial glory soon dangled over soap-suds as he proceeded to scour the deck. He was followed by a gentleman in a lady's opera-cloak, who demanded a passage on the return journey. The nationality of the wearer was obscure, but the nationality of the opera-cloak was unmistakably Parisian, and our first examples of loot proved that not only Chinese had been sufferers. On the wharf lounged several French soldiers in long blue cloaks and blue Tam-o'-Shanters; and two Cossacks in greenish overcoats came and looked at us severely; and Anemone fancied they fingered their "naighakas" with positive wistfulness, though no doubt that was sheer imagination, as the Cossacks were most popular among the Allies, and were "hail fellow well met" with every one.

Count von Waldersee arrived by the afternoon train on his way to Kiao-chau, or rather Tsing-tau, on a visit of inspection. A number of German officers were with him, and spurs clicked in a chorus on the dusty boarding of Tongku wharf. Half hidden by the bowing plumes were several unobtrusive British officers and beaming little Japanese, who did not forget the duty of smiling, even in the stress of *la vie militaire*. There were also two Japanese ladies in western costumes, who looked most independent, and had evidently discarded "the Three Obediences" with their kimonos.

While the company embarked, and heels clicked more precisely, and heads bowed lower over the order of precedence, a band on the wharf struck up "Die

Wacht am Rhein," and the dingy Pei-ho seemed required to add lustre to the glories of the Fatherland, though no stretch of imagination could have transformed stately Ehrenbreitstein into unassuming Tongku or Sin-ho.

Anemone hoped she was not Puritanical, but she thought music must be immoral, it produced such artificial effects.

"I could be patriotic," she said, "to any country that had a sufficiently beautiful national anthem, just so long as the anthem was played. How could any one be anything else than a red Republican while listening to the Marseillaise?"

I reassured her as to the propriety of sound by reminding her that the harmonies of the universe appear from prophetic descriptions to be the chief constituents of heaven, and to what heights of bravery and self-sacrifice might one not rise in this life if one could only have the accompaniment of the proper tune. Of course, as Anemone said, one is so liable to hear the improper tune; but, after all, that ceases to be a danger if the melodies of one's own heart are set in the same key as the inspired harmonies.

The Germanic emotions which "The Watch on the Rhine" had aroused took their departure with the band, and the reaction helped us to realise that several forlorn-looking objects, lying about on the wharf, were huge astronomical instruments ruthlessly taken from the Peking Observatory, where some of them had been erected by the Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century; while others are supposed to have been made by the famous Chinese astronomer, Ko-Show-King, in the thirteenth century, and to have been in existence at the time of Marco Polo's visit.

They were waiting to be shipped to Germany we were told ; and Anemone ceased to hum "lieb Vaterland mag ruhig sein," and vainly yearned to give voice to a patriotic lament of Far Cathay.

We spent most of the afternoon in meeting old acquaintances. Tongku did not look a very probable place to find them in, but that is always the way. London is full of one's friends, yet one may lose oneself there most effectually ; but if one travels to some far remote outer region, the first person one walks into is sure to be somebody one knows. Among our former acquaintances was a dear benign old general, accompanied by an officer whose military title, we presumed, was D.A.A.G., or something of many letters, but whose immediate function was that of nurse, lady's-maid, and companion ; and so tenderly charming was his care of the dear old general that we came to the conclusion it was as well women had begun to undertake men's employments, if only to free such masculine efficiency for the softer rôles.

The general and his attendant were to travel to Shanghai on the steamer, so the general secured the cabin the Russian had vacated, and the staff officer spent the night in the saloon, as our cabin was still unavailable. Consequently, next morning, when Anemone and I sat down to an early breakfast, the staff officer was blissfully stretched out in pyjamas at our side. We were conscious that he was wide awake, but as he pretended to be asleep we were spared embarrassment, and were consequently able to devour our breakfast unperturbed. Unfortunately the time came at which it was usual for his China boy to awaken him, and one could scarcely imagine the trump of doom disturbing a Chinese in his daily routine. The staff officer's slumbers grew so alarm-

ingly profound, and the China boy's summons so overpoweringly lusty, that there was nothing for it but to burn our mouths over our coffee and scramble on deck to avoid the awakening in pyjamas and the commentaries on the subject no doubt confided to the China boy.

It was a still morning. Hoar-frost had coated all Tongku with silver, and red noses surmounted the motley uniforms of the crowd setting off by the train. We were shown to quite a luxurious carriage with a stove fitted in it, and were ushered to our places by the hero of one of Mr Kipling's stories, who was doing the work of the Empire as stationmaster or, to give him his proper title, railway staff officer at Tongku. A former acquaintance, who conveniently happened to be travelling to Tientsin on the occasion, came with us as escort, and the train started off slowly with its heterogeneous collection of passengers, the owners of the soil being crowded into open trucks. Unhappy-looking soil it was that year, left entirely uncultivated, and even the limekilns destroyed. We waved good-bye to the Taku Forts in the distance, and in our transit over the flat bare country passed two melancholy Chinese towns. At last the battered buildings of Tientsin came into sight, and the train drew up at the station where the Russians and the Indian troops were facing each other in the trenches. We had dramatically timed our arrival to the moment of the railway incident, when war between Great Britain and Russia seemed almost inevitable. But feelings of excitement were left to people who read the tidings on placards by London pavements. We who walked past these confronting warriors had no idea even that they were there. Coolies took charge of our numerous possessions, and rickshaws possessed

themselves of us. We crossed the Pei-ho by a rough bridge, which scarcely seemed needed, as junks were so crowded together on the river that one could have stepped across over them. To our right was the French Concession, and roofless houses told realistic stories of what it means to indulge in a siege. Almost every one we passed paraded a different sort of uniform, and Armageddon seemed to be having a dress rehearsal on our special behalf. The bund soon brought us to the British Concession, which, on the whole, had a less battered look. The Astor House Hotel was pleasantly situated at the corner of the Victoria Road, and overlooked the public gardens and the Gordon Hall beyond.

To our surprise there was no letter from Benjamin, and Anemone sat down to tiffin in great depression. The dining-room was like a class-room for a comprehensive study of uniforms. First appeared a Bersagliere, his black cloak and floating plumes making us feel as if we had landed in Italy by mistake. A little chubby-faced Cossack followed, fraternising with a Frenchman in the picturesque uniform of a Chasseur d'Afrique. Both bowed low to all four corners before taking their seats. A German officer in spectacles came next, and clicked his heels till the echoes resounded. The clanking of spurs was an *obbligato* to the Teutonic bow, but Anemone thought in this case the glasses spoil the effect. Anyhow every one was so much taken up in returning it that an English officer in khaki was able to slink to his place unnoticed and escape what he obviously considered the most formidable ordeal of the campaign. He looked almost as depressed as Anemone over the bows that were bent towards him as more and more officers streamed into the room, and only grew cheerful when

he was joined by a little Jap, who sat down opposite, and returned salutations for them both by perpetual little jerks of the head. An officer of the Australian Naval Contingent came in with an American, who waved his slouch-hat round him in general benediction and took his seat with democratic unconcern.

Anemone and I were placed at a small table with the only other feminine member of the community. This, no doubt, was to put us at our ease. It was not our fault that it did not have the desired result, as the lady surveyed her plate severely and had no cognisance of her surroundings except her husband's mouth, which once half opened to ask me to pass him the pepper, but she glared at it indignantly, and he hurriedly shut it up again. There was no mistaking the couple being English, and we found out afterwards that they had been through the Peking siege, so eccentricities had to be condoned. Circumstances are said to be formless in themselves, so entirely are they shaped by the characters of the persons who pass through them. This seemed exemplified in the experiences of the siege. They cast a continued melancholy over some who underwent them, while others seemed to have their spirits raised for life.

"Enjoy the siege of Tientsin? I should just say I did!" said an American woman whom we met later. "I used to go up on top and bring back news to the wounded. My! weren't they mad they couldn't go and look! Have a good time? I should say! The very best in the world!"

She positively glowed over the reminiscences, and so did another juvenile American, whose chief employment on leaving Peking was counting corpses in the Pei-ho.

To return to the Astor House, Anemone's depression had brought her to the conclusion that as Benjamin was silent we must make arrangements for ourselves. The first move must be away from the hotel with its medley of officers—if possible into a little house all to ourselves. A former acquaintance—Tientsin being also conveniently furnished for us in this respect—found us what we wanted in the missionary enclosure. Unfortunately we innocently mentioned Benjamin and his connection with the Field Force. Thereupon the missionary seemed to look upon us in the light of a temptation, and one which she resisted so valiantly that we received a note from her to say the house could not be ours. War and its accompaniments are not pretty at close quarters. Fortunately, through all self-sacrifice rises like a cross of salvation, so we were not surprised at being finally provided for by a staff officer whose wife had spent the winter in Tientsin. They insisted upon our sharing their little four-roomed house, which might have been comfortable for two people but was decidedly crowded with four. To sit on the stairs in the middle of the night was the only way to enjoy the luxury of being alone. However, everything was ungrudgingly shared by the kind strangers, who gave us a shelf and a peg apiece, and restricted themselves to the same limited accommodation, which was heroic in a place like Tientsin, where the chief commodity was dust. There was a profusion of it at ordinary times, and every now and again, for fear of a decrease, the sands of the Gobi desert hurled themselves broadcast in reckless extravagance, and the wind as it dealt out the supply was lavish with the odour of living and defunct Chinese.

The elements are generally energetic about display-

ing their samples to strangers, so, quite as Anemone and I expected, we were, soon after our arrival, treated to the worst Gobi dust-storm that had been known for three years. We were out when the great column swept towards us, and the next moment we were engulfed in the whirling sands of the desert and nearly choked. Everybody scampered indoors, but even in the retreat of the house double windows could not keep out the dust, which was certainly more aggressively disagreeable than any London fog. Anemone expended her whole stock of eau-de-Cologne over this first experience.

It prevented an expedition which had been planned to snapshot the Russians in the trenches, and the opportunity never came again, as next day British marines took the place of Indian soldiers, and by the time we arrived with our kodaks the Russians had altered their minds as to their warlike intentions, and the trenches were as empty as Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

"How aggravating to have missed such a good snapshot," said Anemone, and her remark was characteristic of the usual extent of one's outlook upon immediate events. It is so hard to realise, either as nations or individuals, that the future, which seems so far away and mysterious, is simply our own creation in the present; and we never suspected that the determined policy which placed the marines in the trenches, as the answer to the Russian demand for an apology, was to result in Russia learning her lesson from an Asiatic power, and more or less the equalisation of the racial rights of mankind.

Altogether, we had arrived at Tientsin at a rather riotous time. Part of it is history now, and some of our little daily episodes are perhaps enshrined in

lesson-books. Brotherly love was at times a little strained among the eight Allies compressed into the rather limited confines of the Heavenly Ford on the Northern River—the meanings of the names Tientsin and Pei-ho. While the Zouaves and the Chasseurs d'Afrique were there all was peaceable, and of these the British could not speak in too high praise. Their privates were splendid looking men, with capacious trousers that added to their size. Not only was their physique excellent, but their intelligence, self-reliance, and independence placed them, according to our host, on a superior level to the German soldiers, whose drill was perfection, but who seemed wanting in initiative. Troubles began when the Parisian Regiment took the place of the other French troops. This was not astonishing, as this particular regiment has the reputation of being composed mostly of jail-birds, who are given the choice of undergoing transportation or enlisting for service abroad.

The British soldiers had been shut out of the French Concession all the winter, so it only seemed logical that when the fresh arrivals did not behave nicely the mandate should go forth that the English Concession was to be debarred to them. One of their pet amusements had been to link arms and walk in lines of five and six across the roads, and so prevent people from going past. Several British heads had been cut open, and members of the gentle sex had been treated in anything but a gentle way; so, to put it as delicately as possible, the room of the French had become preferable to their company. This was the state of affairs soon after Anemone and I arrived, and the little thrill of excitement just gave the proper zest to the Tientsin atmosphere. The bund was left quiet and undisturbed for the most part. A huge

bronze bell and some other antiquities lay about by the water-side—loot to be “returned with thanks” to the Chinese by the French. It was in the two chief streets of Tientsin—the Victoria and the Taku Roads—that people mostly congregated. The aristocracy (a little mixed, as is proper nowadays) was represented in the Victoria Road, which was bordered by the Astor House Hotel, the Gordon Hall, the English and German clubs, and some of the principal shops. It was here that ladies might be both heard and seen, and generals paced their chargers up and down with pomposity, turning out the guard. Here, where diplomacy built castles in Manchuria and barracks nearer at hand, more nationalities rubbed shoulders than could be counted on the fingers of both hands, and some of the costumes in evidence told of fashions that had never known the thralldom of Paris or New York. The Taku Road was not so appropriate to airs and graces. On the least provocation its dust turned to mire, and converted it into a regular slough of despond. It was thronged by soldiers and Chinese, who looked more disagreeable than any Celestials we had ever seen. Anemone said she was sure they were Boxers by their expressions; at any rate, they obviously held the same anti-foreign views. The Temperance Hall, the chief building fronting the Taku Road, had been the headquarters of the British Staff during part of the siege, and its dilapidated appearance gave evidence of the attentions it had in consequence received. Other houses near by had nothing to show for themselves except bare walls, and the street was not exhilarating viewed as a promenade. Still, the Victoria and Taku Roads were the chief thoroughfares of Tientsin, and the English Concession had attractions to offer of which

the French Concession was destitute, so the Gallic troops were infuriated at being kept out, and it was soon thought better to readmit them. It was quite uncertain, however, whether gratitude would be shown, and disturbances were the more feared because the Australian Naval Contingent, which had policed the streets, was returning to the Commonwealth. It was a splendid body, composed mostly of retired men from the regular navy who had been doing coast-guard duty in Australia. Anemone considered that a single brawny sailor made a whole street feel secure. As a matter of fact, the Welch Fusiliers, who took their place, did their duty equally well, though their appearance was perhaps not quite so reassuring.

We decided to ignore French disorderliness, and, what was more to the point, hoped that French disorderliness would ignore us, for it was impossible to remain cooped up in a bandbox of a house when so much was going on outside, and officers hurried about, swelled out with consequential importance. Men's methods of managing the world and its armies would have filled Miss Wake with compassion,—they were so slow and laboured. All the poor dear "Fathers" of the eight nationalities seemed in unconscious need of the "Mothers" who took five minutes to settle their home affairs. But Anemone felt profoundly grateful to men for the uncomplaining way in which they undertook the world's dirty work. Why women should ever crave to do it she could not understand, especially as the feminine necessity of having to keep up appearances under all conditions would handicap them so terribly. "An army of women," she said, "might not be more nervous about being shot than an army of men; but what they would feel terrified

about is lest they should not be shot in a becoming place."

She gave vent to these sentiments as we went for our first real walk to the Hai-Kwan-ssu, or western arsenal, from which the Chinese made themselves so objectionable through the siege, till the Americans, the Japanese, and the British Chinese regiment drove them out. It was easy to picture the advance of the Allies over the flat expanse to the capture of the native city, for to the immediate west of the Settlement still stood the shattered remains of the houses that had harboured so many Chinese snipers, and shell-holes and bomb-proofs round us helped us to realise carnage in what was still a desolated scene.

Memories of the second China war were mixed up with reminiscences of 1900. Sankolinsin's Folly, the low mud-wall on which we stood, had been erected by the Tartar general as an outer protection to Tientsin city. It must have tried his temper to hear that the foreigners had settled down inside it after his failure to oust them in 1860. We passed the remains of the pagoda where Lord Elgin signed his treaty. The big bell that belonged to it had been carried off to the public gardens. A forlorn-looking canal ran by the mud-wall, and a new bridge had been put up over it, for the middies had made the old one the chief target for shots from the *Terrible's* twelve-pounder. Altogether, we had a good view of the damage that had been done around Tientsin, as we walked along the top of Sankolinsin's Folly. Away towards the race-course we saw the shells of Mr Dickinson's and Mr Detring's houses. Nearer at hand were graves, some evidently made in a hurry, to judge by protruding coffins. On our other side were the Chinese city in the distance, and ruined houses closer. Between

us and the more prosperous part of the Concession were swamps which took an appropriately gory tinge from the sunset, and a slight breeze stirred the mire and brought from it perfumes that made us wish for the moment that noses had been left out of the plan of Creation, or rather, could be taken off before a visit to China.

"I think we had better hurry back," suggested Anemone.

I was quite of the same opinion.

We had not gone very far before a Tientsin civilian came up and inquired anxiously whether we were properly escorted, as he had just been insulted by a Frenchman. He was very small—a sort of pocket edition. Anemone whispered that she thought he would be a great responsibility, so we declined his protection, and the French behaved quite properly. One man grunted like a pig in Anemone's ear, but she appeared so unconscious of the attention that he evidently came to the conclusion that he had exerted himself unnecessarily. Pickets were out, and order was maintained for the most part, though the French slouched along looking evilly disposed, and ingratiated themselves with the Germans, who took the opportunity to leave off saluting the British. This was a real loss, we thought. The goose-step as a salute was worth walking miles to encounter, and the Teutonic rickshaw salute—the head jerked round and the cheeks blown out simultaneously—was unique as a spectacle.

The disturbances with the French were not long-lived. Their commanding officer was changed, and the privates were admonished to salute politely. It was quite a case of "kiss and be friends." Indeed, in the gardens under the shadow of the Gordon Hall,

the *entente cordiale* was first established when the French band wound up its musical programme with "God save the King," and Britishers clapped vociferously.

For our part we found the soldiers of all nationalities very obliging. It was most convenient to have them at hand to do all sorts of odd jobs. Directly they were addressed in their own language they became the essence of amiability. Even the Germans left off blowing kisses, and relapsed into bland civility when accosted in the gutturals of the Fatherland.

Although the German privates were men who had volunteered for the front, and were, more or less, picked representatives of the army, the German contingent, except for the mechanical perfection of its drill, was something of a disappointment. The goose-step before attack, for instance, made the other Allies wonder whether the Teutons imagined themselves rehearsing for a pantomime. Their transport was considered bad, their hospitals poorly managed, and many of their men were lost through disease. Their infantry excelled the other branches of their service. Some of their artillery-men treated us to a novel exhibition of horse-breaking by stoning one of the battery animals which had broken loose. Some of the officers, however, were splendidly mounted, and one of the best gentlemen jockeys of the Field Force had been "made in Germany."

The weeks went by before we saw Benjamin. He had been away from Peking at the time of our arrival, and was much astonished to find a pile of telegrams awaiting his return. They had been sent him by anxious Shanghai acquaintances, who had been kind enough to feel alarmed about our hasty move, but whose information reached him no sooner than our

letters, telling of the good Samaritans who had taken us in. Benjamin, in his turn, went house-hunting in the capital, and as he was still unable to take leave to come and fetch us, he wrote glowing prognostications of the future that awaited us in a genuine Pekingese abode.

Anemone now thought it time to see about servants, and in any case we were in need of a "lady's-boy."

The occupation of North China by the Allies was by no means an unmixed evil to the Celestials. Curio dealers received larger prices for rubbish than had ever been known throughout Chinese history, and servants' wages went up by leaps and bounds. We did not wonder at this as we heard our hostess interviewing her house boy on the subject of providing us with a servant. "My savvee, boy, now belong plenty muchee wages. Allo thing now plenty muchee cost. Plenty muchee wages must catchee, my savvee, boy."

We thought the boy "savveed" it too quite sufficiently without any need of the fact being so impressed. Our purses also "savveed" it, and at the rate of payment demanded Anemone decided that we could only afford a general servant when we took up housekeeping in Peking.

"We will keep this boy they are fetching and train him as a 'general,'" she said.

The house boy was determined that we should have our money's worth in splendour; and our "general" when he arrived might have been Tung Fuhsiang or any other smart celebrity, though his expression was too benign for us to credit him with anti-foreign views. He stood six feet high, and was attired in gorgeous brocades. The outer coat was

dark blue, the inner lining was pale blue, and a touch of rose pink was artistically added here and there. He held himself loftily before us, with his hands lost to view in his coat-sleeves and his eyes fixed haughtily at a point above our heads. He was manifestly a Number One boy—that is to say, he corresponded to a family butler at home, who gives his orders to the footmen and lives in an atmosphere of dignified pomposity.

Anemone asked not a single question. His former characters and his present capabilities were not inquired into by her. She only looked at me and murmured, "I am not equal to him. Are you?"

I said I thought I was, and I invited him to follow me "topside" and then gave him the benefit of my advice.

"My savvee you belong number one boy. My savvee too you catchee number one, number two, number three, number four boy's pay. So you belong number one, number two, number three, number four boy; and number one, number two, number three, number four boy's pidgin belong you too."

Here I was rather interrupted by our hostess in the next room inquiring whether she could help me in my arithmetical difficulties. However, Shih Fang, the new domestic, understood. I gave him the shoes to clean, the brushes to wash, the skirts to brush, and was more amazed at my temerity than if I had so encroached upon the functions of the magnate of a servants' hall. However, in the mornings Shih Fang divested himself of his finery and appeared in white tights, and did the duty of number two, number three, number four boy. In the afternoons he resumed his brocades and the whole solemnity of a

number one. Anemone considered that he would lend style to any establishment, and Fido's infidelity had been opportune after all.

Thus provided with a "general," we were all readiness when Benjamin came to fetch us at last. Once more there was packing to be done, and "PEKING" to be written in large letters on all our labels. This was just accomplished and the rickshaws were at the door when a telegram arrived from the General-in-Command. Benjamin tore it open.

"Mrs March and sister-in-law are not to reside in Peking," was what it curtly announced.

Anemone sat down on her label and reduced "PEKING" to an ink-stain.

"You had better go, or you will miss your train," she said.

Benjamin departed, and I sat down opposite Anemone on my box, and in my turn made a smudge of "PEKING."

CHAPTER XXVII.

TIENTSIN, PEKING.

SINCE the ice had vanished from the Pei-ho a succession of globe-trotting ladies had passed through to Peking. Three at once had even pounced down upon a certain renowned newspaper correspondent, regardless of being complete strangers to him, and of his never having entertained ladies before in his life, as he piteously confided to Benjamin. Consequently Anemone and I, for whom a Chinese house had been properly requisitioned, felt ourselves very badly used. I told Anemone, in the ears of the Headquarters' Staff, that the General might have the right to interfere about his officers' wives, but that I, as a mere sister, was outside the pale of his jurisdiction.

"Oh no! you are not," said the members of the Headquarters' Staff. "Of course you belong—you *both* belong to the Field Force."

We said we thought not—in fact, we preferred not to, if they had no objection. However, we did not wish to be rude, and at last acquiesced as they seemed so pressing about it. Only, if we belonged to the Field Force, we thought we were entitled to decorations.

The Headquarters' Staff suggested that we might

receive medals as camp-followers. There were three of them—followers, not medals—hanging over a wall at that moment like so many shapeless bundles of swarthy humanity; one could not quite make out where the faces began and the clothes left off. As the Indian soldiers were mostly attended by servitors, the followers were many. Among the undiscerning Allies they were sometimes exalted to heights to which their imaginations could have never dared to scale. A group of them was included in the Japanese photographic account of the Expedition, and was proudly entitled "Officers and Men of the British Indian Army." Anemone found it refreshing to find that the Japanese could be inaccurate, and considered that copies of the photo should be distributed through India as a compliment to the coolie class.

The meek and mild brown bundles must sometimes have been rather surprised at the encomiums lavished upon them. After a successful expedition outside Shan-hai-Kwan, undertaken by a party of French and the 20th Punjab Infantry, the former were so enraptured at the valour of their fellow-combatants that the officer in command flung himself upon the neck of a bhisti, or water-carrier, who innocently encountered the force on its return.

"Ah! mon brave," he cried in excitement. "Ah! mon brave, tu es vrai soldat!"

One might have thought the Japanese would have known better, as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was already in the making on the shores of Far Cathay. In fact, the Japanese identified themselves with the British to the extent of classifying their other Allies as "dagos"; and one day a very ruffled little Jap marched up in great indignation with the complaint

that "a d——d macaroni-eating dago" had been insulting him. Any liberties the British took were received with serenity, and they let themselves be made use of as walking-sticks by a certain British general, about six foot four in height, who used to seize the small warriors by the heads in the exuberance of his affection, and twist them round and round, exclaiming, "How I do love these little Japs!"

As it happened, the coming adversaries of the Japanese—the Cossacks—almost rivalled their future foes in the affections of most Britishers. It is true they were constantly drunk, but their admirers said that it did not seem to matter, as they were "such gentlemen even in their cups." The officers were not thought much of, but they too were quite pleasant little people, whom it was difficult to associate with the massacre and bloodshed that is all one hears about them in newspaper reports. In fact, all the Russians were most agreeable; but then, as Anemone said, it might be easier for us all to be the same if truthfulness need never be taken into account.

Anything connected with the Steppes seemed to have a fascination, though why it should we had not the remotest idea. Anyway, we were charmed with the Russians for inviting us to see a Cossack riding display. The Cossacks were mounted on shaggy little ponies, and looked clean and tidy and surprisingly harmless in white caps and coats. It was only natural that men partly of Tartar origin, to whom the symbol of authority in bygone days had been a standard of horses' tails, should seem equally at home in the saddle, whether sitting, lying dangling across it, or standing on their heads or their heels. Sometimes two or three mounted a single pony, and locked their legs together over the saddle, and

doubled back on opposite sides, with heads almost touching the ground. Then the Cossacks changed their expressions and their performances at one and the same time. They suddenly gave a wild war-whoop and charged ferociously, firing rifles and brandishing swords. The remembrance of them as they galloped past makes one glad one does not inhabit a Russian street which they are ordered to patrol. As a finale they rode slowly away together, chanting in chorus some pathetic old folk-song. We did not know the language, so could not tell whether they sang the praises of Bogdan Khmelnitski, the great Hetman, under whom the Cossacks revolted against the Poles and transferred their allegiance to the Tsar. The eerie melody made them less like Russian soldiers and more like wild Steppes' bandits, and as their name "Kazak" is supposed to have signified "robber," this in all probability is what they originally were.

At the end of the performance the Russian officers were profuse in their gratitude, and appeared to consider themselves enormously indebted to us by our amiability in allowing ourselves to be entertained. So we returned home, feeling quite gratified; it was such a contrast to the way in which some English hostesses seem to expect your fervent thanksgivings for having been gathered together for no ostensible purpose except to be hopelessly bored.

We saw even better riding a day or two afterwards, when the Bombay Cavalry practised for the Peking Assault-at-arms. They had large chargers to manage instead of little ponies, so the trick riding was harder and yet was better done. No circus horses could have been better trained.

Great friendship sprang up between the Indian troops and the Chinese. "The Chinaman is a gentle-

man," was the almost unanimous verdict of the natives of Hindostan. One constantly saw them fraternising, and more than one "sowar" perhaps did a good turn to the Empire by giving a good report of British rule. The Chinese regiment was certainly effective in the way of instilling confidence into Celestial minds; and when one remembers the large part this regiment played in the fighting, and how efficient it proved itself in all the work intrusted to it, one can only feel certain that in discarding the martial services of John Chinaman the Empire has sustained a very real loss.

At that time we did not see much of the Chinese in the Settlement, but we could more than make up for this deficiency in the native city, where their attractions were a good deal marred by ophthalmia and other unbecoming complaints, and toeless feet and all manner of gruesome deformities.

The Provisional Government at that time managed affairs at the Yamen, and had placed a petition box outside, which the Chinese looked upon with much awe, as they believed it to be fitted with an electrical apparatus which was set in violent motion by any important petition, but hardly gave any indication of insignificant applications. Whatever contempt the Chinese may feel for the "outer barbarians," their belief in their powers is certainly flattering at times.

The thieves' bazaar was our favourite haunt in the native city. This hardly sounds respectable, but our visits there were really most innocent, as no plunder came our way gratis, and with so much competition between buyers, curio dealers charged a sort of famine price. Shih Fang used to escort us, but we preferred to do our own bargaining to avoid the "squeeze"

which he was certain to extract. Some people disapproved of our private excursions, and said they were not "safe," so one day in a weak moment we consented to be chaperoned by a party to the thieves' bazaar. Our friends went in rickshaws, Anemone and I were on China ponies, consequently the others expected us to act as guides. Shih Fang was not with us to direct us, the rickshaw coolies would take no responsibility, and the tortuous streets were a maze. Before we even entered them we were challenged by a little Jap sentry, who let the rickshaws pass unmolested, but wanted to interfere with Anemone and me. However, we charged him, brandishing our "naighakas," for we had armed ourselves with Cossack whips. He pointed his bayonet, but we rode over him, and have gloried in the achievement ever since. We were rather pleased with this commencement, but our friends in the rickshaws were of a different opinion, as the coolies had taken fright and bolted, and they had been almost jolted off their seats. There was no room to run away once we reached the native city; there was no room even to turn round, which was particularly inconvenient, as we needed plenty of scope for making experiments down wrong streets. We had started early, but it was decidedly late by the time we arrived triumphantly at what should have been the thieves' bazaar. Our friends left their rickshaws. They felt stiff and sore and battered, and made significant observations that bargains would need to be very good to make up for all they had undergone. The coolies sat down and contemplated some hours' tranquillity. Anemone and I made inquiries, and found that the thieves' bazaar was closed for the day. Nobody would have cared to exchange their lot for ours at that moment, though

we made the most of circumstances by carefully explaining how everybody but ourselves was in the wrong. Anemone had just successfully proved how much a martyr she had been to my folly, and I was showing how I had suffered on her account, when some one returned from the exploration of a remote corner and gave evidence of two dealers and some wares. We determined to make the most of what we could get, and I at once began to drive a brisk bargain; but, unfortunately, the man who placidly resigned me all I wanted proved not to be the owner of the things. The lawful possessor was overcome with indignation. I pressed him to take back his property, but that was not in accordance with his ideas of "face." His only method of asserting his self-respect was to wreak vengeance on his neighbour, so he overturned the other man's stall. Crash went the china on it! The crowd closed round and accused the two of being Boxers. Our friends said it was no place for ladies. Anemone quite agreed, and looked at me severely. I did not see how I was to blame, though my gain was undeniable, for I had my bargains; to have left them behind would have been worse than useless, for they would only have been broken into bits. Still, it was very distressing to have created such an uproar, and it was more than fortunate that a wedding procession diverted general attention; and we made the rickshaw coolies follow the sedan-chairs of the bridal party, as the piping and squealing of the musical instruments ensured us against hearing any further complaints. That was the first and last time in China that we undertook to guide chaperons. On all other occasions we either omitted them or left them to guide us.

The next time we set out in any numbers was when

we went to see the Grand Canal. We rode to the city by the same way in which the Allies approached when they stormed it, and where they lost about 900 killed and wounded in the day. Passing through the city we were, as usual, a centre of interest to the inhabitants. We were as good as a travelling circus to the children brought out to stare at us, and in our turn longed to buy the babies, they looked so like mechanical toys. Beggars were, so to speak, active spectators, and bowed their heads to the ground and chanted mendicant ditties over and above the usual setting of noise and smell. Some of the people were too busy having their ears cleaned and their queues plaited to take any notice of us. We remarked that, although barbers might not become mandarins, there seemed no fear of their ever swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

We passed through Sankolinsin's Folly by a gateway guarded by an Italian sentry, and there before us stretched the Grand Canal, looking much the same no doubt as it did in the thirteenth century when the great Kublai Khan completed it, and Marco Polo travelled along it on his Chinese official duties intent. On the opposite bank three men were tugging a large junk, just as others may have done when the Venetian travellers marvelled at the advanced civilisation of China, and acknowledged themselves as Europeans to be little better than the outer barbarians which the Celestials have ever since considered them,—and this in spite of the fact that those early globe-trotters hailed from the city of the Doge.

We came back along the top of the wall and passed some Boxer shelters. Our scenery consisted of graves. We found nothing to be astonished at in the material tendency of Chinese thought as we looked over the

teeming evidences of fleshly mortality. The higher the grave the greater the inmate ; but, unfortunately, no one we met could tell us what magnates had been buried under two enormous erections,—one a cone, crowned by a miniature, three-storied earthened pagoda ; the other, next it, a truncated pyramid with a fancy top. And there in the vast burial-ground was a shepherd feeding his black-faced flock ! Along the road below us, Peking carts, rickshaws, and wheel-barrows passed occasionally. In the distance, rising above the native city, were the three cupolas of a Mohammedan mosque, and in places long poles projected to indicate a yamen below. A soft light idealised everything. Khaki-covered nature was struggling to put on her fresh spring clothing, and in the Settlement gardens the apple and peach trees were dressed out in pink and cream. Anemone thought they looked as if they were blushing at having been caught by the bright April sunshine before they had had time to get out their leaves. Yet they showed their common-sense by not taking to their summer things too early, for a day or two later spring had a nasty snub. A terrible dust-storm swept over Peking, and a wind from the north did its utmost to let Tientsin have its share. For some hours it positively rained mud. There was nothing for it but that winter should return for the moment and throw down a snowy blanket to cover over the mess. But spring soon reasserted itself, and the willows that fringed the moat round Pei-yang, the eastern arsenal, were breaking into bud when we rode out there one sunny day.

This arsenal was said to be one of the biggest in the world. It was managed by a Scotchman till the time of the Boxer outbreak. The Allied commanders had planned to attack it on the 28th June, but the

Russians started out to take it a day in advance, with the result that they were driven back and were supposed to have lost 2000 men. A British force—the Naval Brigade and the Chinese Regiment—went to their help, rushed and took the arsenal, and then politely handed it over to the Russians, who then, as since, paid a dear price for their unwise ambition, as we saw too clearly by all the little crosses round us, that told of young lives cut short and misery in women's hearts far away.

Anemone and I were conducted round the battlefield by an officer who commanded during the engagement,—a privilege which it is a pity not to be able to pass on to everybody, as personal experiences told among the actual surroundings are satisfactorily productive of thrills. As we rode away the officer described all the details of the fighting, and no doubt we exhibit our feminine inferiority by having forgotten what he told us of military tactics, only remembering what appealed to our sympathy,—the story of the poor marine who had the calf of one leg blown off and the other leg badly injured, and yet ran for his life across the plain to escape from the Boxers who had made a fearful end of a wounded brother-in-arms.

We went back by the station and passed the great Krupp gun with the help of which the Chinese had hoped to demolish Tientsin. Instead, there stood the Settlement gradually recovering its looks, and the gun on guard outside. Some of the defenders were already saying good-bye, feeling their work was done. The Americans left while we were there, and we were glad of it, for the greedy reason that they sold off their commissariat supplies, and we were able to buy canned fruits and delicacies

of all sorts. The American soldier goes in for patriotism comfortably. Every private was provided with a bed, and the cloth of his coat was equal to that worn by a British officer. As to the warm gloves and soft leather boots, Anemone thought them fit for a lady. They certainly were for a gentleman, and possibly that accounted for them, as social distinctions are a little confusing in the armed forces of the Stars and Stripes.

Benjamin once heard an officer suggest tentatively to a private: "If it would suit your convenience I'd recommend your doing so and so."

"Is that the way you give orders?" asked Benjamin, much interested.

"Wa'al! it's like this," said the American. "When we get back to Noo York I guess that chap 'll resume his capacity as my boss."

Another officer hoped to advocate the cause of democracy by treating an English soldier. "I calculate," he said, "if I'd been a British officer I shouldn't have been drinking along with you like this."

But Tommy was discriminating, and made answer: "No offence, sir, but if you was a Britisher you wouldn't be an orficer, I expect."

Departures certainly increased restlessness, more especially in Tientsin, where everybody seemed to suffer from a sort of chronic state of the jumps. Anemone and I found ourselves possessed of a fund of energy that would have been most desirable had it not been so erratic and ill-timed. When Anemone wished to write letters at one o'clock in the morning, and I was filled with a desire for exercise when everybody else was asleep, we grew anxious about each other, till the residents assured us that the

climate was entirely to blame. The dry atmosphere tightened the nerves, and existences often went snap by the tragic means of suicide. Some constitutions did not seem affected, but, on the whole, a good deal of intensity was put, not only into the day's work, but also into the night's play, even to the extent of a cavalry charge on chairs down the length of the Victoria Road, with any number of world-famed personages taking part. A dance at that time was certainly a most arduous performance for the few ladies. With each turn round the room the partner changed, and so did the step and the language, until finally one became unconscious whether it were a Russian, a German, a Frenchman, an Italian, or a Double Dutchman who clicked his heels before one and swept one off.

We preferred the French band for dance music. The German band was too fine for anything inferior to Wagner. "Die Walküre," "Lohengrin," and "Tannhäuser," at the concerts, made us feel transported to Bayreuth.

A lieutenant had command of the German band, and was most kind in sending it to play us *aubades* and serenades. He had another speciality as well, —a dog-cart in which he drove a tandem, a big German horse for the wheeler and a little China pony in front. It was about the only horse vehicle in Tientsin at that time, except one or two official tongas, so when I was offered a lift in it to the Tientsin races, I thought only of the escape from the long, dusty rickshaw ride, and said, "Thank you. I shall be charmed."

I was not quite prepared for the decorations of the tandem, nor for the excitements of the drive. The big German horse and the little China pony

wore garlands of yellow roses, and were covered with blue and white draperies. Unfortunately their attire kept slipping off sideways, so we had a running escort of German soldiers to put it straight again. The verandah of the Astor House Hotel was crowded with officers, and just as we passed they sprang to their feet in excitement, for, with a clanging clash, the band lieutenant's sword fell out behind.

"You have dropped your sword," I told him, but he drove on unconcerned. I suppose he forgot it might have been made in Birmingham, and was convinced no well-regulated German weapon would dream of exposing its martial owner to the indignity of dropping it. So now we were pursued by a scuttling crowd of Celestials carrying the sword, and shouting "Stop! stop!" in Chinese in a way that made John Gilpin's experiences pale before my own.

Meanwhile the China pony ambled down all the side streets, regardless of the direction in which the rest of us were going, till we reached the race-course road on which there were no turnings, so he then twisted about among the line of rickshaws, jeopardising their occupants. As we approached the race-course I begged that we might stop quietly outside. However, neither the band lieutenant nor the China pony wished for this. I might have managed to repress one at a time, but their united efforts proved too much. For the first time during the drive the China pony condescended to move in front of the wheeler. He took the bit between his teeth and galloped ahead. The band lieutenant cracked his whip. The blue and white trappings blew out on either side. Yellow roses showered around. In this manner we swept up in front of

the grand stand, with the field-glasses of the armies of Europe focussed upon us, and I felt that the lot of Korah, Dathan and Abiram was not without its advantages.

The original race pavilion had been devastated by the Boxers. There had been a skirmish just beyond it after the siege, when the Japanese cavalry routed and killed hundreds of the enemy. The ruined remains were still there to remind us of past calamities, but who paid attention to them while those cosmopolitan horses were the deep consideration of the cosmopolitan throng? Anemone could not decide whether more nationalities were numbered among the men or the animals. Certainly the latter were varied to a marvellous degree. There were horses from Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia — Arabs, Walers, Indian country-breds, China ponies, and Barbs that looked like rocking-horses, and made the race-course reminiscent of nursery days. The jockeys were equally varied and unusually resplendent, as some rode in all the glory of their uniforms.

The French had a steeplechase all to themselves. Just as the signal for starting was about to be given, one of the riders descended and set up a camera and took a portrait of his rocking-horse. The others did not seem to mind waiting. Indeed, the whole race was conducted throughout with such polished French courtesy that Anemone was sure some of the officers pulled up at the jumps and said, "Après vous, Monsieur."

The Tientsin races were at the end of May, and with them our sojourn in China ended, but before they came to pass, at the end of April we paid our respects to Peking. Although not allowed to live there, no one could grudge us a visit, and so, in a

high state of expectation, we set out for ancient Cambulac.

A guard of soldiers travelled on the train, and the most mixed assortment of passengers filled the compartments. Some travelled outside. A party of Bersaglieri sat on top of a packed van, cheerfully singing and demolishing their lunch, hunks of stale-looking bread. Equally gay and vivacious were some Japanese in white hospital raiment. At the stations bare-necked, baggy-breeched Zouaves came out to inspect us, and Chinese children tried to sell us queer little animals with pointed snouts. On the country roads we often passed men riding. Their straight-backed ponies wore curious, clumsy saddles, but the donkeys often did without any, and the riders sat so far back on the haunches that the luxury of kicking could only be indulged in in cases of very light weight. Once a deceptive mirage transformed the flat country, and we seemed to see mountains and woods and lakes. As we neared Peking the scenery grew prettier. The land was more cultivated, the vegetation more luxuriant, and trees became realities instead of phantasies.

And so in that modern train, with the guardians of a freshly formed civilisation, we passed to the site of the city of "Chi," believed to have been in existence as long ago as 1121 B.C. Though this original city was destroyed, other buildings seem soon to have taken its place, and to have formed an important district city, which by successive tribes of Tartars was elevated to the rank of a capital. It was laid waste by Jenghiz Khan when the Mongolians conquered North China; but his grandson, Kublai Khan, built a new city near by, named Khan-balik, the City of the Khan, or Cambulac, as Marco Polo called it. It is to this period that most of the present palaces

are said to date their origin. At the succession of the Ming dynasty Nanking was made the capital, and it was not till the reign of the third Ming Emperor, Yung-lo, that Khan-balik resumed its old dignity as the first city of the Empire. By Yung-lo it was named Pei-ching, or the Northern Capital, and there the Ming and Manchu Emperors have ever since resided in the Forbidden City, the walled-in Holy of Holies that enshrines the Imperial palace. There they have passed a sort of Arabian Nights' entertainment existence that would, no doubt, make excellent "copy" for stories, but might be a little trying as a personal experience. It almost seemed as though we were going to take part in it when we heard our destination announced as "the Temple of Heaven." Anemone thought it would be more suitable to step off a magic carpet than out of a railway compartment. Yet ours, after all, is the real wonder age. We are only ceasing to tell fairy tales because, instead, we enact them. The minds that pictured flying carpets would see their wildest imaginings surpassed by our rushing train.

At the Temple of Heaven Benjamin met us, and so did a company of Sappers, and two large waggons drawn by teams of horses with riders. They were intended for our luggage, and the score of packages that generally accompanied us, without having any provision made for them whatsoever, would no doubt have been much accommodated by the preparations, but with the irony of fate we had restricted the number of our boxes to suit the limitations of our stay in Peking; consequently our two small trunks looked very meagre in their vast surroundings. However, Shih Fang mounted too, and sat upon them in the splendour of his blue brocades.

Of the Temple of Heaven we saw only the wall that encompassed the enclosure. Its exploration had to be left to a future date, so, when the waggons were out of sight and the dust had subsided, we started off for the Tartar city in our more humble conveyances.

Our first observation was on the state of the roads, as they caused our transit in rickshaws to feel rather like trotting on China ponies. Our next observation was on the dust which immediately enveloped us, and as it was perfectly black we anxiously watched each other assume the complexion of African negroes. A band of Cossacks formed a superfluous escort most of the way, and in consequence hastened our acquirement of the Ethiopian tinge. The third observation was on the width of the roads,—so different to the narrowness of the alleys in most Chinese cities. All the same, they were not much more convenient as thoroughfares, as both sides were blocked up with booths, and the citizens bought and sold, hammered and sawed, fashioned and sewed, plaited their hair, had their heads shaved, and did anything else that occurred to them for general edification in the side-ways. Most of the streets were made more complex by raised causeways down the centre. As these were thronged by people on foot, by Peking carts, rickshaws, sedan-chairs, and long lines of contemptuous-looking camels, the “changes and chances of this mortal life” seemed likely to be increased by tumbles over the edges. The causeways had utilitarian purposes of their kind, no doubt, and caused the sideways to be more conveniently transformed into drains during the rainy periods. Behind the booths were houses with curved, peaked roofs and picturesque sign-boards hanging in front of them. When we entered the

Tartar city we came on a number of desolate ruins, and most of the really nice houses, where we caught glimpses of picturesque courtyards, had foreign sentries at the gateways, and foreign flags to mark their appropriation by one or other of the Allies.

Walls are almost the chief feature of Peking. This did not surprise us, knowing as we did how the inhabitants of all Chinese towns, and even villages, delight in feeling themselves securely, or more often insecurely, surrounded. The famous Great Wall shows the futile attempt to make a walled enclosure of an empire. Consequently Peking is not content with outer walls, but every section of its interior is encircled by mammoth ramparts. The wall of the Tartar city is about forty feet high, and so wide across the top that a meeting of the Four-in-Hand Club might almost be managed comfortably upon it. The view of the precipices on either side might be rather shattering to nerves, but the same trial, in a minor degree, has to be endured in taking exercise along the causeways. The wall of the Chinese city is lower and has seven gates, while the wall of the Tartar city has nine, the largest of all being the Ch'ien-men, or Front Gate, with three archways. It was still in a very demolished state when we passed through it, as, in addition to the damage it received at the time of the siege, its towers were accidentally burnt by our troops the day after the relief of the Legations. The Tartar city wall was erected by the Emperor Yung-lo in the year 1419. The suburbs to the south that now form the Chinese city were walled in more than a century afterwards.

We had just passed through the Ha-ta-men gate when the rickshaw coolies stopped by a little archway, and Benjamin informed us that we had arrived

at our destination. We should not have known it without being told, for the queer little courtyard into which we passed, and the series of little peaked-roofed houses beyond, with other paved courts to connect them, did not convey the usual idea of a hostelry, and we felt more as though we were the guests of a mandarin than ordinary hotel visitors.

The dining-hall monopolised a whole building. That night a German band played, and the place was packed by a heterogeneous collection of officers. We could hear the music in our rooms, which were in another building that consisted of four little apartments divided by paper partitions. My wall had the drawback of being composed more of holes than of paper. By the bed an extra large tear gave a full view of an individual stretched on his couch just the other side of the partition. However, publicity did not seem to distress him, as he kept up an illumination of candles, instead of going to bed in the dark—the example which I set him.

Anemone's wall was more intact, but of quite as flimsy a character. I found her much perturbed by having to do audience to the conversation of a couple installed on the other side of it. It was mysterious as well as embarrassing, as we heard names of people we knew being mentioned; but of course, as we might have expected, next day out walked some former acquaintances, and we found ourselves shaking hands and saying, "How do you do?" in the most natural manner. We might have lived in London for years, and have never come across each other, but as far off as Peking we were not the least astonished to find them only parted from us by a paper barrier.

The band played us a lullaby that first night, and

now and again we could hear the host militant break into a vigorous chorus. As I turned my back to the tattered wall I turned my face to the clear round moon sailing above a peaked roof, and flooding a quaint, paved court, just as it might have done in the Golden Age, two thousand years before Christ, during the reigns of the Yellow Emperor and his successors, Yao and Shun, when no doors needed barring, because there were no such people as robbers, and the ideal Simple Life was practised by everybody in China.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PEKING.

ANEMONE decided that the mere streets of Peking gave us quite sufficient scope at first for sight-seeing. For one thing, it was so interesting to find ourselves among Manchus; not that there was anything to make one particularly aware of the fact, except the head-dresses of the women, which project on either side of the head, with a flower adorning each end, unlike the Chinese women's closely - coiled locks with their flatter ornamentations. At the time of the Manchu conquest the male population of China had abjectly to conform to Manchu ideas of hair-dressing. Not so the ladies! They immediately asserted woman's rights on the subject of dress; and General Wu San-kuei, upon tendering his allegiance, had to make special stipulations that the women were to be allowed to squeeze their feet as usual, and make no alterations in the way they did their hair. To the European idea a pig-tail is so much the distinguishing feature of a Chinese that it is difficult to realise that, no further back than the middle of the seventeenth century, the queue and its shaven surroundings were mere marks of subjection to the Manchu conquerors. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Manchus themselves wore tails before they enforced them upon the vanquished. Some authorities believe that they took to them in imitation of the horses

so much beloved by the Tartar tribes, and consider that the horse-shoe shape of their sleeves gives further confirmation to this theory.

When the Manchus first conquered Peking the Tartar city was made the residence of the military, or banner-men, so called because the army was divided under eight banners. But as even the bannermen were not all Manchus, but also included Mongols and Chinese, and the shopkeepers of the Tartar city were Chinese, and numbers of other Chinese have since bought the houses of bannermen, it was not surprising that Anemone and I noticed very little that was exclusively Tartar about the Tartar city.

In the shops the Chinese were just as ready to give us kind advice over purchases as any other of their countrymen, once they had been persuaded out of their correct indifference as to whether we were going to buy. Our conversation was apt to be a little monotonous, as it had to be carried on in Chinese, and our knowledge of northern mandarin consisted of such remarks as "To shao ch'ien?" "T'ai kwei" (how much? too dear),—necessary but not deeply interesting observations. Still, no doubt, we gave them all the variety we could by playing havoc with the intonations. At any rate the shopkeepers seemed quite pleased, and regaled us on tea, with strict impartiality as to whether we were purchasers or mere admirers of their possessions. The only danger was when I mistook the teapot for a curio, and, turning it round to examine it, poured its scalding contents over Anemone. The salesmen simply fetched fresh tea, while the original supply dripped alternately off the antiques and Anemone, so I replied to the latter's protestations by a panegyric upon Chinese equanimity. Certainly it merited praise, for some of the wares were too beautiful to run risks of a deluge. They included a jade vase made in the shape of a lotus flower, and little

crystal snuff-boxes most exquisitely painted in the insides,—unconscious object-lessons of Carlyle's definition of genius. We were shown a vast selection of china,—some crackled, some with the lace pattern, the china so delicate that the light shone through in places. The bronzes dated back so many centuries before we were born or thought of, that they made us feel quite vulgarly new and modern by comparison. Most of the best bits of cloisonné had been made in the reign of Ch'ien-lung, when perfection in enamelling is said to have reached its height. The art is not indigenous to China, but seems to have been introduced there from Western Asia about the thirteenth century A.D., and to have also been brought independently to the southern provinces by the Arabs a century or more later. The French Jesuits, during the Ta' Ming dynasty, seem to have occupied themselves much with the art; and the Celestial we found at the head of the modern factory spoke French and looked French, in spite of his queue, out of compliment, I suppose, to early Gallic proficiency. Speaking generally, Chinese curios have a higher value in China than in other countries where their worth is not fully appreciated. Some of the buyers of loot might have done better to have sold their bargains to Chinese instead of sending them over to England, where their chief purchasers are said to have been their original owners who reclaimed them for Far Cathay.

One of the generals lent me his charger to help me to explore Peking. It was rather an agitating process, as the steed took command and I was obliged to obey and sit meekly on him while he practised jumping off the causeways, regardless of the Peking carts, the camels, the sedan-chairs, the booths, and the salesmen, who expostulated in a chorus of impotent rage. Benjamin suggested that the outside of the Tartar city walls might suit the charger better as a scene of action, and

that I could at the same time examine the Water Gate where, at the time of the relief, the Indian troops first effected their entrance. But quiet examination and the general's charger were not to be enjoyed at one and the same time. The scenery was not what one is accustomed to in a city, so I suppose he thought his behaviour might follow suit. Above us rose the grim wall, and below it, on the rough embankment, he started off at a break-neck gallop, jumping the chasms that intervened, for, possibly due to the siege and the fighting, the ground came here and there to abrupt terminations that I found very alarming, though the charger showed the utmost indifference to such minor inconveniences. It is doubtful whether any of the Legation relievers endured more agitating emotions than mine on the outside of the Tartar wall. In fact, the Indian troops had no cause for agitation, for, as everybody knows, they strolled into Peking unopposed. On that memorable 14th of August a combined attack had been planned by the Allies. At two o'clock in the morning, however, the Russians crept out stealthily, hoping to be the first to arrive. In a twinkling the Japanese followed them, and the French soon after also set out. The British General refused to move. "We stick to our orders," he said, "and start at 6 A.M." The Chinese met the advancing enemy and kept them engaged in battle, while at the appointed hour the British quietly started, and at ten o'clock a company of mounted Sikhs came in through the Water Gate and were the first to relieve the Legation.

What a small place it was,—that British Legation where the ministers of eleven nations and people of fourteen nationalities were cooped up for so many long weeks. As we looked down on it from the top of the Tartar wall it seemed as though it must have been almost impossible for the Chinese to have avoided

taking it. To understand how this came about one has to remember that out of fifty Krupp guns they are said to have only succeeded in firing one, and that Professor Gamewell bought his ammunition for the defence from the attacking Chinese. At that time, too, the Celestials looked upon crackers as suitable weapons of war. Retirement was a tactic to be carried out first by the general in command, and so on from higher to lower grades in proper order of precedence. When the Chinese fight again it may be under very altered conditions. Our own Chinese regiment has shown the excellent fighting qualities of John Chinaman. The reorganisation of the Chinese army is becoming an accomplished fact. The people are said to be ceasing to look upon soldiers with disdain and horror. Chinese officers are in Europe studying military methods. Yuan Shi Kai is believed to be working hard at the formation of a Chinese army on the European pattern. It is estimated that in ten years' time China will be able to put over a million trained soldiers into the field. When the Celestials take up the art of warfare as seriously as their ordinary daily avocations, one cannot but imagine that they will excel in that as much as in anything else.

More terrible than the siege of the Legations was the siege of Pei-tang, the Roman Catholic Mission, where Monsignor Favier held out so bravely with three officers and a small force of about forty French and Italian marines. The façade of the cathedral when we saw it was still riddled by shot. Inside the building, however, a Chinese priest was officiating, and Chinese converts were praying as placidly as though Christians had never been persecuted in China, but had always been accorded the privileges they enjoyed at the close of the sixteenth century, when Ricci, the great Jesuit missionary, was high in favour with the Emperor, and

there seemed for a time some prospect of the Chinese showing the same favour towards Roman Catholicism that Buddhism had already received.

Three thousand native converts had been included among the besieged.

"Whatever could they have fed on? That is what puzzles me," said Anemone.

We had left the cathedral and passed into the grounds through the Mission buildings. There Anemone's problem was solved with pathetic realism, for all the trees were stripped of their bark, and had the most pitiable skinned appearance that was eloquent in explaining the wretched diet of the miserable refugees.

"What a sight for an epicure!" said Anemone. "One certainly never knows what one can eat till one tries."

Beyond, we saw the great mine the Chinese had exploded, though even that success did not give them courage to rush the place. The Italian lieutenant in command had been buried alive on his bed by this explosion, and it took three-quarters of an hour to dig him out. Sœur Angèle gave a most graphic description of the horrors of his experience. She was one of the sisters who worked in the Mission and helped to educate the Chinese girls. She wore a dark-blue serge dress with a white apron, and a great white cap shrouded her face. Winter and summer, in cold and heat, she said she had always to wear the same clothes. We could not help wondering why sanctity need violate the rules laid down for general learning in nature's great lesson-book. The vegetation and trees may have foliage appropriate to the season. Why should the poor little nun be made uncomfortable to be good?

She told us of the Mother Superior, who kept a diary

through the siege and died five days after the rescue, which did not take place until the 16th August, as poor Pei-tang was forgotten for two days after the relief of the Legations, and the Japanese were the first to remember to free the sufferers.

Sœur Angèle had great dark eyes and was very sprightly. We noticed that members of the Field Force seemed much in need of her as guide. Anemone considered that a siege was most out of place at a convent. When any one has taken the trouble to forsake the world for a sisterhood it must be a little upsetting to find the world still come chasing after one in the shape of field brigades.

Sœur Angèle and the siege of the Pei-tang seemed like a chapter out of a story-book, but the volume was changed, and we were back in the Arabian Nights' world when we left the cathedral to go to the Mei-shan, or Coal Hill. Our way lay across a great lake, green with a covering of lotus leaves, and spanned by a bridge of the purest white marble. Above the Forbidden City walls fantastic roofs with coloured tiles showed among the tender green of the fresh spring foliage. On an island in the lake rose a thickly-wooded hill, and on its summit stood the rather ponderous-looking Ming pagoda. Marble-paved ways led to the ruins of what had once been the Winter Palace—burnt down earlier that year, together with the asbestos house Count von Waldersee had specially taken to China on account of its supposed fireproof qualities. Beside the lake's edge we saw a miniature railway line, said to have been laid for the amusement of the Empress-Dowager. Anemone found it pathetic to think of this. It advertised the captive playing at liberty, and pretending to be free when bowed down by the yoke of bondage.

Benjamin thought the term "captivity" not well applied to Yehonala. "She has been free enough to

do no end of mischief," he complained, with a great want of imagination, for Anemone and I were both agreed that the mischief had ensued from want of proper freedom. Had the Dowager-Empress been able to wander where she liked, could she have harangued mandarins in public anywhere, and have shown off her costumes to the general public, it is more than probable that she might have been more discreet in her love affairs and less vindictive to her near relations. When one thinks of the restraint women have undergone for years and years, one can only wonder that they have not indulged more in mischievous outbreaks. "Give a horse his head and he won't come a cropper" was a favourite maxim of Benjamin's. Anemone and I thought it might be very suitably applied to the cases of many women. At any rate, that pure white marble bridge, the pagoda-crowned hill, and the lotus-covered lake, made us think charitably of Tse Hsi, for only good fairies and no evil genii seemed in keeping with the most beautiful surroundings any one could picture in the heart of a city.

The view, too, from Mei-shan, Coal Hill, made us agree that Peking, apart from its drawbacks, was the most fascinating city of our acquaintance. The hill itself was artificially made, and coal is supposed to have been stored beneath it centuries ago as a precaution in case of siege. It was covered with trees, mostly species of fir, and among them temples had been prettily situated. Some of these had been destroyed, and had nothing to show for themselves except melancholy ruins; but on the summit a blue-roofed temple remained, though its idols had been looted. From here we looked down on the marble bridge and the lake covered over with water-lilies. In another direction, in a straight line to the south, stretched the Imperial Palace, with its porcelain roofs of yellow—the imperial

colour. Here and there green-tiled roofs proclaimed the habitations of high princely connections, and blue roofs, imitating the colour of the sky, marked temples for the worship of Heaven. Round the Forbidden City rose the protecting wall with large projecting gateways. Beyond, in the distance, were glimpses of the other great walls of the Tartar and Chinese cities. For studies in roofs China is perhaps unsurpassed; and in Peking we saw coloured tiles embowered in trees that made the old capital look like a model for a garden city. On the horizon was a purple outline of hills, veiled by a golden haze that was nothing else than the ubiquitous dust of Chih-li, charitably idealised by the sunshine. What interested us most was the Forbidden City, whose halloed precincts had for so many centuries been prohibited to all except high officials and actual court retainers. The very hill on which we stood was one of its protections, and was meant to guard it on the north from all evil influences. It did not seem to have succeeded, for the Emperor and Empress were fugitives, and their sacred domicile was in the charge of "foreign devils," who had not the least compunction about intruding. We, for instance, on leaving Mei-shan rickshawed round to the southern entrance, where an American sentry examined our passes and told us to "go right in," with a nasal twang that belonged to the Bowery, and had no connection whatsoever with an eastern potentate. Anemone thought it enough to make the skeletons of the Ming emperors shudder in their tombs, let alone the absent bodies of the living Manchu rulers.

To "go right in" took some time. We had first to cross one of the five marble bridges that led over the moat encircling the outer wall, after which we passed through an entrance which had a large upper hall built above the passage-way. After the relief this had been found filled with bows and arrows, and

Chinese swords that had evidently been made in Birmingham. On the other side we walked along a marble-paved way through the great courtyard that led to the triple entrance of the inner wall of the Forbidden City. Arrived safely inside we were received by a mandarin, to Anemone's and my huge satisfaction. Peking without mandarins had seemed very incomplete, and so far these dignitaries had been conspicuous by their absence. We knew our guide was a genuine mandarin by his head-gear, which, we thought, looked like a massive lamp-shade crowned by a miniature lamp-globe. The globe was really the world-renowned "mandarin's button," and its colour—pink in this particular case—was the index to the rank of the wearer, and so we supposed was the feather that trailed down the back of the lamp-shade,—but all we gathered from it was that it was certainly not a peacock's. Anemone took it for a crow's, only, that being the case, as crows' feathers are inexpensive, there seemed no occasion for its bedraggled appearance, in spite of hard times in the palace. However, the feather was only in keeping with the condition of the whole place. Everywhere through chinks in the marble-paved courts and steps grass and weeds were sprouting. We passed through the main buildings in a direct line from south to north, each of the yellow-roofed edifices being separated from the next one by a white marble-paved courtyard. The interiors for the most part were gorgeous with bright colours, but Anemone's lynx eyes spied out flaws in the splendour. I thought it an almost brutal discovery when she pointed out that pieces of the ceiling, peeling off in places, were nothing else than coloured paper stuck on to squares of canvas. It was painful to be so disillusioned about palaces more than six hundred years old, dating back to the reign of Kublai Khan and

the height of China's prosperity; but, after all, such adjuncts as the papering were no doubt modern, and marble courts remained to tell of departed glories, with rank grass protruding as mourning for present desolations.

One of the officers in our party was fluent in Chinese, so through him we extracted all the information we could from the mandarin, whose besetting sin did not appear to be loquacity. As far as we could make out the first buildings we passed through were reception halls, and formed the outer part of the palace. The first, the Hall of Great Harmony, had been built for the use of Yung-lo, the third Emperor of the Ming dynasty. It was surrounded by marble balustrades and bronze tortoises and storks and eighteen bronze urns, symbols of sovereignty over the eighteen provinces of China. Inside the hall was a magnificent throne, on which the Son of Heaven was intended to seat himself on special high days to receive the congratulations and homage of his courtiers and important officials. Anemone hoped the floor was cleaner on those occasions; she thought it looked most uninviting for the headachey ceremony of bumping heads in the nine prostrations. Cleanliness and godliness were not likely to have been combined in the days of the early Jesuit missionaries; so no doubt they did not scrutinise the ground too closely when they performed the kow-tow, and were given access to the palace in their capacity of painters, astronomers, &c. Since those days stringent rules had been made to prevent the entrance of any foreigner into the Purple Forbidden City. It was not until the 28th August 1900, when the Allied troops marched through the palace, that its sacred precincts were trodden under foot of the "barbarian."

We next passed through the Halls of Central and

Precious Harmony, and reached the entrance to the inner palace, called the Gate of Heavenly Purity, as we found out in the guide-book. In front were two wide-mouthed lions, with muscular legs shaped rather like men's arms. Each rested a paw on what was intended to represent a ball of silk, according to the same guide-book; the mandarin did not condescend to such details. His zoological knowledge, in fact, did not appear to extend to the bronze menagerie in the courtyards, and we wished we had Adam with us to name some of the animals.

The officers of state were said to come to the Gate of Heavenly Purity to present petitions, and to be present at the five o'clock audiences. We felt the toiling millions of China were certainly set a good example when their ruler commenced his day's labours before five o'clock in the morning. Anemone was very anxious to know whether he was punctual and left himself time beforehand to take his early tea. She insisted upon having her query translated; but the mandarin declined to reply, and hid his hands in his coat-sleeves and looked at us with "white eyes," as the Chinese say — that is, with the eyeballs instead of the pupils, which is tantamount to not looking. Still, one has heard of certain mandarins who have died of over-strain from the struggle to be in time at the matutinal audiences, after perhaps not being able to get to bed till past midnight; so apparently the Son of Heaven is not unpunctual, and does not say with the French, "*Je five-o'clockerai à sept ou huit heures*, or any other time that may happen to be convenient." The example of hard work is to all appearance first set us by the Creator, and of all the races of the globe none seem to follow it more closely than the Celestials. From the highest to the lowest almost all are busy workers. The five o'clock audiences made

Benjamin cease to wonder at the longevity of China. Nations are not cut short till the drones are multiplied.

We were quite excited to find ourselves crossing the threshold of the inner palace—the Holy of Holies inside the Gate of Heavenly Purity. In the imperial library the mandarin's heart melted, and he presented me with a yellow silk book-marker, stamped with dark letters, from one of the imperial volumes which were said to range back to the very earliest ages of printing in this country, where the art was first discovered. We lingered most in the Emperor's bedroom. The bed was in a little recess, and Anemone and I sat on it so long that we began to be afraid we might make it uncomfortable for the imperial slumbers. The rest of the apartment looked like the room of a person who might perform his toilet between 4 and 5 A.M. The furniture was more adapted to the "plums, prunes, and prisms" demeanour of our own great-grandparents than the accredited luxury of an Oriental potentate. Anemone said the five o'clock audiences and straight-backed furniture made her convinced that Kuang Hsu might be instructed in bodily comforts by many English cooks, who must have their sofas to rest on during the intervals of cooking the dinner. But then luxury, like so much else, is a matter of environment, and lounge-chairs and down-pillows might inflict the sufferings of an ascetic upon an unaccustomed Manchu back and neck.

We saw some beautiful carvings and lovely bronzes and cloisonné, though the apartments had been to a great extent denuded by Allies or Manchus. Clocks of all descriptions were much in evidence, and appeared to form the favourite collection of the imperial family. As we passed through the rooms of the different

imperial ladies the ornaments became more and more shoddy as the rank of the lady increased, till finally they paraded little else than European-made trash. Yet, after all, the greatest rubbish from the Occident was priceless in so far as it fulfilled the conditions of a curio. We were shown the suite of rooms used by the Dowager-Empress when she was a mere secondary wife. Of later years she has not been very partial to the Forbidden City, the mandarin told us in confidence. In one of the ladies' rooms we were shown a screen that was certainly worthy to grace a palace of the longest-lived empire. It was entirely made of ivory and the bright feathers of the blue jay. Men and women, trees and flowers, pagodas and gardens, were all fashioned in these dainty materials, and the gleaming blue of the feathers against the soft cream of the ivory was as much a feast for the eyes as the exquisite delicacy of the scenes and figures they were shaped to represent.

A number of Manchu ladies were still living in a corner of the Forbidden City, but neither bribes, threats, nor entreaties would induce the mandarin to take us to them. We told him that we would behave nicely and do our utmost to entertain them, for we were certain that they must often be unutterably bored. Such a suggestion seemed novel to the mandarin, as far as we could judge from a countenance of utter imperturbability. However, we could see that it had not the slightest weight with him. Boredom, interspersed by quarrels, was perhaps too much regarded as the inevitable condition of the sex. Anemone and I felt so disappointed at not having our wishes gratified that we were not in the best mood for the inspection of the private temple to which we were taken next. It was full of beautiful bronze vessels and censers, and possessed a great gong and a yet greater bell. The

idols wore gorgeous clothes, which had probably been the garments of princes. They were striped at the bottom to indicate high rank. Unfortunately, the colours were turning a little dingy, at which we did not wonder in that musty atmosphere redolent of stale incense and yet staler dust.

Outside in the garden, shaded by old juniper trees, some more Court officials joined us and tea was served. They were so affable, and seemed so pleased with our society, that we took our time in drinking the tea, though Benjamin grew a little restless, as he whispered that he was sure he had heard somewhere that tea was served in China as a signal that it was time for a guest to depart. As we had already taken more than three hours over our call, there certainly seemed some probability of the tea being a delicate hint, but as none of the visitors were certain of the hidden meaning it was equally obscure in its effect. Our conversation had to be rather restricted, as we had only one interpreter, and he insisted that Chinese figures of speech were too complicated for him to interpret for more than one at a time. However, it was soothing to hear our "honourable selves" commented upon in terms of poetic licence, and the mere fact of drinking tea with mandarins and eunuchs in the Emperor of China's private garden seemed to put us on an intimate footing with any flowery metaphor.

Our surroundings need not be described; they were those of willow-pattern china, and I began to be nervous lest Anemone should take to a fixed illusion that we ourselves were all figures on a tea-service. The mandarins regarded her and me with much the same surprised affability that we noticed sometimes on the faces of Chinese shopmen. "These strange barbarians," they seemed to say, "are in terrible need of the teachings of Confucius. Without them how topsy-turvy

their ideas have become on the subject of the Five Relations, whose true observance has made the Middle Empire. How uppish the women have grown, ordering people about, and eating and drinking with strange men without the least sense of propriety. Copy foreign customs? They are certainly amusing to criticise; but what insensate could imagine that we would copy these mushroom growths which owe the best of their puny roots to the Chow Ceremonial, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Analects of Confucius—those Chinese classics at the basis of the world's civilisation?"

We gave the mandarins credit for some such thoughts, and Anemone and I longed to be able to tell them that propriety had better be like the hidden foundation-stone than outer veneer, which, though showy, does nothing to support the fabric. However, instead of theorising upon decorum, we practised it by finishing our tea and departing.

We were escorted to the north gate, where we passed out between sentries along the very way, I suppose, that the last Emperor of the Ming dynasty hurried to the Mei-shan to commit suicide. Poor T'sungcheng! He was to be pitied as he looked down on his city burnt and devastated by the rebel Li. He hanged himself on a tree, and left the fate of Peking to be decided by the fortunes of a little slave girl—a great beauty, the beloved of General Wu San-kuei, in command of the imperial troops. When the Generalissimo heard that she had been taken possession of by one of the rebel officers, his one and only desire was to bring about his revenge. To effect this he threw in his lot with the Manchus, who for some years past had been struggling to make their power paramount. The forces of Li were defeated, the young Manchu prince was installed as Emperor, and so the present Ch'ing dynasty commenced.

"They owed their rise indirectly to a woman," said Benjamin, who considered that historical researches should point a moral always. "They owed their rise to a woman, and a woman seems to be bringing about their overthrow."

But Tse Hsi, the daughter of Joy, knew better, and we told Benjamin so. Already, in a Shanghai silk shop, we had seen gorgeous curtains which she had ordered to be prepared for her on her return; for she knew she would come back, bowing and smiling and condescendingly gracious. She intended this to happen, and, as all the world and his wife know, this is precisely what came to pass.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PEKING.

OUR paved courtyard, surrounded by little peaked-roofed houses, was one of our joys in Peking. We used to take breakfast in it every morning, a little interrupted by the servants, who could not be persuaded not to empty people's baths there while we were in the middle of our meal. In the evening moonlight transmogrified it, and it looked most theatrical as officers, soldiers, and Chinese of any and every description came round the corners, showed clear in the moonlight, and vanished like the chorus passing through the wings on the stage. In the daytime, too, the different hotel visitors went by, and some were not without special interest. One was a lady who had been exploring far and wide, and had an unfortunate tendency to be taken ill at the goal of her wanderings, and to be obliged to stay on at places unprovided with accommodation for stray tourists, though really she gave no trouble, for, as she said, there was nothing she wanted,—“Just a tooth-brush, if you could let me have that. Nothing else at all, really, thank you.” But, sadly enough, it was just the request for a tooth-brush that brought despair to the soul of the embarrassed young subaltern.

She concluded her Chinese tour in a part under the command of an avowed woman-hater, and sympathisers

trembled over her probable fate. But they need not have worried, for she was last seen and heard of in China, on the sea-shore, with the woman-hating general, and, like the walrus and the carpenter, the lady and the general were walking hand-in-hand.

We could never spare much time for the courtyard with all Peking before us, and palaces and temples, closed to foreigners for generations, all open to our good pleasure in the most accommodating way.

"The Confucian classics are the basis of Chinese education," Benjamin was kind enough to tell us, so after the Forbidden City it was to the Confucian Temple that we next went.

We found a high hall, fronted by a fine marble terrace and sombre-leaved cypresses, said to date back hundreds of years, to the times of the Mongols, and so quite as venerable as their looks. We did not wonder at the habit of planting them by Confucian temples, for no other trees could seem so much in keeping with an old-world philosophy that has been the key-note of the instruction of millions of people since the sixth century before Christ. Inside the hall were tablets to Confucius and other sages, the more conspicuous being those of the authors of standard works. Besides this main hall were other buildings, with tablets to the learned and virtuous, a court for the triennial examinations for the highest literary degree, and the yellow-tiled Hall of the Classics, fronted by a yellow porcelain arch. The last building was put up by the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, and the others also are said to have been erected during this present Ch'ing dynasty, though the actual foundation of the Confucian Temple is believed to date back to the thirteenth century.

Anemone was not so much interested in the edifices as in the tombstones, which were even more numerous than the cypress trees.

"What a mania," she said, "the Chinese have for cemeteries. They cover their landscapes with burial-mounds, and surround their Temple of Fame with graves."

But Benjamin assumed quite a Celestial attitude of reverence for the tablets, and explained their uses, which were not to indicate the last resting-places of the deceased. Two hundred stone monuments were engraved with the text of the nine classics to ensure them against any modern "burning of the books." Other stones were engraved with copies of the old seal characters, growing fainter and fainter on the original ten black, drum-shaped blocks. These last are supposed to date back to the Chow dynasty, and so to be more than 2500 years old. Their antiquity made them the principal objects of interest, and so, with the unfeeling contrariness with which "sights" so often behave to "sight-seers," they somehow escaped our attention, and all we could remember was a medley of tablets like tomb-stones, and nothing particularly reminiscent of drums.

In front of the examination court Benjamin implored us to pay special attention to the stones which recorded each examination, and gave the names and addresses of all the doctors of literature for the last five hundred years. Such a list is, of course, stupendous, but so is everything connected with the education of the Chinese. Scholars take the first place in the country, but from the time they enter the village school and bellow their lessons with their backs turned to their master, the way to fame and distinction seems as much uphill as a precipice, unless they buy degrees, or obtain them by methods of cheating that are not unknown, in spite of the precautions taken to ensure fair-play.

We saw some of the open cells from which the candidates are not allowed to move during the whole period of examination. If any even die during the

interval, they must depart this life quietly in their places without disturbing the other candidates. As nonagenarians are sometimes included among the literary aspirants, and contagious diseases are occasionally known to break out during examinations, the death-roll is said to be by no means always nil. Examinations in the district cities, in the prefectural cities, in the provincial capitals, follow one after the other in weary succession, each conferring a higher degree on successful candidates. Anemone wondered all were not centenarians by the time they attained to the Peking examination and tried for the highest degree. Those who gain it have their fortunes made, for the most part; while the actual senior wrangler is renowned all over China, and all who own the same surname, let alone his actual family and his deceased ancestors, are ennobled by his success.

"I don't wonder at it," said Anemone, who felt worn out by the mere account of such colossal studies. "He must know enough to work out any imaginable problem. I wish we had one with us. There are endless questions I should like to ask."

She was quite depressed when Benjamin explained that it would be useless to seek from him for any information that had not been originally imparted by Confucius, Mencius, or somebody else who lived some hundreds or thousands of years ago. The scholar's brain is a storehouse for the wisdom of the ancients, and the sum-total of his gigantic efforts is the production of essays and poems displaying this old-world knowledge, strictly free from innovations, and observing the same rules of composition that his forbears have always obeyed. Anemone and I no longer wondered that Fido, Shih Fang, and every other Chinese with whom we had come in contact, had been so pained and astonished by irregularities of any sort.

Yet even then new ideas were pouring into China, and gradually filtering through the less-obstructed brains. Kang Yu Wei and other reform writers had shown how Confucius really preached progress and not stagnation; and instead of only studying the history of China, they had compiled treatises upon the histories of almost all the countries of the world. Every one knows how the Emperor, Kuang Hsu, favoured the reform movement, and was made to suffer for his temerity by the Empress-Dowager. But the latter, to outward appearance, seems to have profited by experience, and possibly now considers that her nephew was not quite the fool she thought. The Viceroy, Chang Chih Tung, advocates that special attention should be paid to the history of Chinese government during the last hundred years. Such advice shows the change that has stolen over China, where it has up till now been considered ridiculous to study any but past dynasties. The success of the Japanese in the late war with Russia has, of course, been the clinching argument for forwarding up-to-date ideas. Instead of the Confucian classics, "foreign learning" is now being made the highway to official positions, and colleges are being opened for the education of girls. The fetish "custom" seems actually to be doomed, and the chief interest of the present century is the uprising of a regenerate China out of the ashes of a wonderful age-worn past.

We were nearly honoured by burial in the Confucian Temple, for, like most of the Pekingese edifices, the buildings were surrounded by walls. Part of one fell down almost upon us as we rickshawed past to the great Lama Temple, but as it did not time its descent quite punctually we missed ending our careers at the Fane of Confucius, and were able to study the doctrine of re-incarnations at the great Lamaserai.

Our visit was a little hurried, as we had an appoint-

ment for tea at the little Lama Temple. Tea-parties at temples sounded rather profane, but then, as Anemone said, tea-drinking has been converted into a ceremony in Japan, so it surely was an imperative function for us in the country where it was instituted first. Meanwhile we walked past beaming Japanese sentries into the courtyard of the great Lama Temple, and inspected two bronze lions and a bronze incense urn, eight feet high, while the lamas inspected us. They were supposed to be dressed in yellow, but their robes seemed a good deal discoloured, which was not to be wondered at considering the hue of Peking dust. Most of them carried rosaries, and Anemone and I purchased a couple which led to monkish interest becoming alarmingly intensified. More than a thousand lamas, we were told, inhabited the monastery, and we were soon of opinion that the whole company would surround us to offer their rosaries for sale.

"It would be so terrible," said Anemone, "if the great Lama Temple ran out of rosaries all on our account."

So we thought it best to withdraw the temptation of "filthy lucre" by hurrying inside the temple, where as many followed as could. They practised the Mongol and Tibetan form of Buddhism, and were themselves mostly Mongols. They seemed very cheery and pleasant, and their substantial persons gave no outward evidence of their studies on the non-existence of matter, nor their attainment of "a heart fixed on nothing," though some of them looked as though they might have "a mind which dwells nowhere." We could not tell whether we only saw those who were occupied in studying astronomy, astrology, and medicine, or those who were struggling to desire nothing at all.

"What a lifetime it must take any one to succeed, and what a pity when they do," said Anemone. "They

have only stifled the vitality that might have been such a power in desiring what was right."

Benjamin was of opinion that it is no wonder mankind has been so slow to realise that true religion should be a sum in addition to life, instead of a sum in subtraction, for the subtraction so continually takes place, willy-nilly, no doubt to bring out the correct balance of character.

Anemone confessed that the temple interior had the converse effect of quenching desire as far as she was concerned, for a pair of pale blue enamel and gilt bronze elephants before one of the altars made it difficult not to break the tenth commandment at once. We were glad that the guide-book so far justified our covetous feelings by pronouncing them *chefs-d'œuvre* of Chinese art. There were all sorts of vases and candlesticks and altar utensils to look at, and pictures of Buddha, past, present, and future, and Kwan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy, and Amitabha, presiding over his western paradise. We were not surprised to find that Kwan-yin and Amitabha were introduced by the Buddhists of northern countries, such as Tibet and China, and were not acknowledged by the Buddhists of Ceylon and southern parts. Especially could one understand the western paradise appealing more to Chinese than Nirvana. One can well imagine the Indian founder of the religion sitting cross-legged for six years to attain the Enlightenment that was to help to free the suffering millions over whom his heart yearned; but seldom, except among the Christian converts, does one hear of Chinese being substantially interested in other troubles than their own. Though a majority of the four hundred million inhabitants are said to be continually hungry, it appears to be from sheer force of necessity and not as a means to obtain Nirvana as an end. Desire is not so much quenched

by abstemiousness, as it is provoked into dreams—not of peace in Eternity, but of New Years, weddings, funerals, and other occasions that involve good fare. Anemone even had doubts of Chinese aspiring to be born out of water-lilies—the new birth into the Heaven of Amitabha to those who sufficiently often repeat his name, O-me-to-fuh, and so gain admittance to the Happy Land of the West. That was as it may have been. As our knowledge of the language consisted of purely mercantile phrases we could not inquire into ethical problems, and so may have been quite wrong in dissociating Chinese aspirations from lotus buds.

Before us in the temple towered Maitreya, the coming Buddha, who no doubt knew all about it, for as he has not yet gained Nirvana like Sakyamuni, he is considered more amenable to mundane affairs. A Japanese soldier, in height five feet nothing, had followed us for the apparent purpose of being chaffed by Benjamin. The Japanese were the only people who had ever been known to incline Benjamin to frivolity. The miniature warrior took his stand below the wooden figure, seventy feet high. The inscrutable countenance above stared into the temple shadows. The inscrutable countenance below smiled an inscrutable smile. The scent of incense filled our nostrils; the sound of a cracked voice intoning something—it may have been O-me-to-fuh—woke echoes on the walls. A priest stepped up to us, mysterious as the imagery of the Orient, and then—the spell was broken—Benjamin reminded us that tea would be waiting, and the lama held out his rosary and uttered one of the few Chinese sentences with which we were acquainted, “To shao ch’ien?” (“How much?”)

As we betook ourselves to our rickshaws, Anemone observed that she thought had Shakespeare been a modern traveller he would have stated that “one touch of mammon makes the whole world kin.”

By the time we reached the little Lama Temple it was too dark to see much of the interior, which seemed to be in rather a dilapidated state. Some of the poor gods and goddesses had not been treated at all respectfully, and by their broken-nosed, woe-begone appearance bewailed the taking of Peking by the Allies. I rescued a forlorn, little, gilded Amita from a dust-heap and carried him away with me, clasping his lotus flower, to a land of the West, where he smiles benignly and seems contented with the only substitute I could think of for the western paradise. He is dusted daily at any rate, and his robes look far more resplendent than when he first left the dusky temple and watched us at our tea-party on the portico outside.

Some Chinese jugglers had been engaged to amuse us, and they joined bits of burnt string, munched blazing tow with relish, and out of thin air produced bowls of fat Chinese goldfish with long flowing tails and enormous goggle eyes. It almost seemed as though they must be in league with Amita. A tiny boy was with them, and when the others had finished he suddenly produced plates at all parts of his small person, and balanced them on the ends of sticks with such recklessness that Anemone said it was enough to bring on an attack of "high strikes" with any good housewife possessed of a proper respect for crockery ware. But he was not satisfied by racking her feelings over his first simple methods, but proceeded to turn somersaults and stand on his head, and at the same time keep the plates whizzing in the air. Some of the Punjab Infantry were quartered in the grounds of the temple. A number of men came and looked on and expressed admiration, but seemed anxious to receive plaudits also, and gave a gymnastic display on their own account. The small Chinese boy watched them attentively, and

then copied all their performances, making each one more difficult and elaborate than anything the Punjabis had done.

Benjamin was very thoughtful as we once more summoned our rickshaws. "How can any one," he inquired, "in forecasting the future, leave the Chinese out of account?"

We would not commit ourselves to anything so rash as prophecy, but we did feel more or less convinced that if the Chinese are left out of anything it will only be by obstinately excluding themselves.

But we were far too dust-begrimed to ponder upon the fate of nations. It took us most of the evening to induce the hard ineffective liquid which is known as water in Peking to make us a little less like chimney-sweeps. Anemone considered that civilisation involved a great waste of time to no purpose, for of course next morning we looked as grimy as ever before we were half-way to the Temple of Heaven, which Benjamin ordained that we ought to visit next, and which was only to be reached through the busy, crowded streets of the Chinese city.

We found a fine park inside high walls, and passed along a wide avenue that led through it. As usual, before long we came to more walls, and near to the entrance of the inner enclosure stood the Palace of Abstinence, where the Emperor spends a night of fasting before performing the great religious ceremonies.

Benjamin told us to picture the fine procession—the elephant carriage (so long as an elephant was left alive to draw it), the Emperor in his imperial yellow sedan-chair, the bannermen, the musicians, the princes and mandarins on horseback, passing into the enclosure the evening before the morning of sacrifice. The Emperor is allowed no sleep during the night of preparation, but

must spend the interval in quiet, holy thought. Nearly two hours before sunrise he puts on his sacrificial robes and sallies forth to be the officiating priest.

Anemone thought he must be prepared for such a trying experience by the five o'clock audiences. Still, she doubted whether the Son of Heaven could sufficiently enjoy himself in the Palace of Abstinence to mind it being occupied for the time being by British troops. On a stretch of grass to our left the assault-at-arms had been held, and we found ourselves confronted by various sign-boards directing us to the transport depot and other prosaic places which we were doing our utmost to forget. Passing along the avenue we came to a marble ascent leading up to a long paved way, which brought us to a great circular erection, consisting of three terraces one above the other, each surrounded by a balustrade. This was the Altar of Heaven, formed of pure white marble, and on the central stone of the highest terrace the Emperor kneels when he worships Heaven. There, encircled by the terraces, the walls of the enclosure, and the horizon, he prostrates himself in the Centre of the Universe before the tablet of Shang-ti, the Supreme Ruler, to whom alone he is inferior. The tablets of the deceased emperors are also placed on the great altar, for their spirits are supposed to be present, as are also the spirits of the atmosphere: winds, rain, thunder, &c., to all of whom offerings are made, though the principal are intended only for Heaven, especially the bullock which is offered as a burnt sacrifice on a furnace near by.

Benjamin was most anxious that we should picture the scene correctly, but as the crowd of courtiers was as much absent as the Emperor, and there were no musicians present to make the air discordant with the "Song of Universal Peace," the conditions did not tend to realism, though we did the best we could under the

circumstances, and placed ourselves on the Centre of the Universe, as Kuang Hsu—at that time at Si-an-fu—was relegated to a paltry corner.

The tablets of the Supreme Ruler and the deceased emperors are preserved in a circular, blue-roofed chapel at the end of a marble-paved way. Its tiles matched the sky that morning, sunshine gleamed through the cypresses, and the white altar was bathed in the brightness and warmth of a Chinese May-day. It seemed a suitable spot for the Son of Heaven to offer prayers for the welfare of his people, and to perpetuate the original belief of the Chinese in a Supreme Creator.

The chief service at the Altar of Heaven is held at the winter solstice. The Emperor should also offer special prayers for a propitious year in the spring-time at the northern altar. To this we now made our way, following a marble-flagged path, and passing under an archway where before us, on a raised marble terrace, rose the triple-roofed, circular building known to foreigners as the Temple of Heaven. It had an uncared-for, desolate look, and grass and weeds were sprouting between the marble steps of the terrace. But these details were lost in the general effect of gleaming whiteness, crowned by circles of deepest blue—the rich colour of a tropical sky on a brilliant, sun-flooded forenoon,—while a golden pear-shaped knob pointed to the heavens from the summit of their earthly representation. The groundwork of the walls inside was of the same deep blue, the other colours being green and mauve and yellow. The altar-pieces had been of the most beautiful pale blue cloisonné, but they were to be seen no more, for the temple was bare; everything in it had been looted, and the altar set had been shown us months before in Shanghai by its English purchasers. Anemone reminded us of this, and we heaved a sigh for the departed glories of that

Fane of Prayers for the Year—the azure-vaulted Temple of Heaven.

We did not go to the Temple of Agriculture close by, for, as we could not witness the operation, we decided to take it on hearsay that the Emperor ploughs a plot of ground there in the spring to prove himself a pattern of industry to his subjects.

“Poor man!” said Anemone. “That as well as having to take his early tea before five o’clock every morning?”

We felt we had followed his example of hard work quite sufficiently for our own comfort, and were glad that the next day was Sunday, when laziness was admissible.

In the evening we went to the service in the Legation chapel. The British Legation had been a “Fu”—that is, a prince’s residence—till the British took it over in 1861. The descendants of an emperor are said to be entitled to hold possession of a Fu for three generations, after which it reverts to the reigning potentate, who in his turn bestows it upon a son or son-in-law. The posterity of a prince gradually diminishes in rank at each succeeding generation. A line of princes cannot be indefinitely extended through the ages, which Benjamin thought a wise precaution, as no limitation seems to be placed on the number of imperial progeny.

At the back of the Legation was the Carriage Park, held by the Boxers during the siege. The terror of those dark weeks when a little plot, under six acres, was surrounded by a menacing multitude came home to one in the chapel, where the congregation consisted almost entirely of officers of the relief force, and the chaplain was renowned to us for his recent heroism. Outside the little chapel the slanting rays of evening sunlight fell across ruins, and here and there on the

armed sentries of the nations from far away. Inside, with curious appropriateness, Hymn 477 was given out, and the Kingdom of the Intangible seemed strangely present as the host militant lifted their strong voices and sang—

“The sun that bids us rest is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it, Lord ! Thy Throne shall never,
Like Earth's proud empires, pass away ;
Thy Kingdom stands and grows for ever,
Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway.”

CHAPTER XXX.

PEKING.

VERY early one morning Shih Fang and Subramoni appeared in our courtyard. Subramoni was a Madrassee with a chocolate-coloured complexion and a meek expression of patient long-suffering in his melancholy eyes. He was Benjamin's special henchman, and intrusted his fate to him with as much humility as any slave. "What master pleases," was his unfailing observation when consulted as to future plans. During his sojourn in Peking tidings had been sent of the sudden death of his wife. Benjamin recorded that "What master pleases" was his only comment when this news was broken to him, though Benjamin was inclined to resent this term of resignation, as he was not in the habit of being pleased about anybody's demise.

Subramoni and Shih Fang had become bosom friends. Shih Fang's lofty dignity contrasted with Subramoni's humble servility, and extremes met in their case. Though so friendly to one another, they affected to despise each other's compatriots. Shih Fang ruled all other natives of India as though he were the Son of Heaven, and Subramoni's usual timidity was converted into rigorous austerity in his dealings with other Chinese. In our courtyard they were able to hobnob without these distracting elements, and Anemone and

I were of private opinion that Shih Fang had a sneaking admiration for Subramoni's disregard of family ties. The kitchen premises of our Tientsin establishment teemed with four or five generations of the ancestry and posterity of Shih Fang, the cook and house boy. Hoary nonagenarians and infinitesimal babies were alternately engulfed and disgorged at the kitchen door. That Shih Fang was a good son, grandson, and great-grandson after the true Confucian pattern, it never entered into our minds to doubt. The rabbit-warren conditions of family life in China never struck him as inconvenient, we felt sure. Still, it seemed to us that it was with some satisfaction that he sunned himself and his brocades, and appreciated Subramoni's unobtrusive society in the seclusion of our courtyard.

They were to have it very much to themselves on this particular occasion, for Anemone and I were to spend the day with Benjamin at the Summer Palace of their Imperial Majesties. Indeed, Subramoni's and Shih Fang's rather premature appearance was for the purpose of announcing that the tonga had arrived.

Though a veil of dust hung over Peking and the atmosphere was unalluring, the cavalcade that awaited us was most inspiring. First there was the tonga—the round-topped Indian conveyance marked with the name of Dhanjibhoy, the patriotic Parsee who presented a number of these vehicles for military service in the South African and Chinese campaigns. Beyond were a couple of mounted Sappers and two Bengal Lancers, looking most picturesque on spirited horses, with their lances gleaming above high turbans in the early sunlight that penetrated the enveloping dust. Benjamin carried his revolver, and declared the armed escort to be necessary. A short time before a German

officer had ridden out to the Summer Palace unattended and had been shot dead on the way.

The tonga had been expressly provided to give us the benefit of springs; but Anemone, who occupied the front seat, said she could understand why the Chinese dispensed with them in their Peking carts. She was not at all certain that they were not doubtful advantages among the pitfalls of Chinese roads. Indeed, as she spoke, a pronounced chasm in the causeway sent her bouncing into the driver's lap. However, the next moment some ruts displaced her, and as the driver continued to drive with meek imperturbability, ignoring her remoteness or proximity, Anemone resigned herself philosophically to unexpected transits from her seat to his knees. Benjamin and I, at the back, had the greatest difficulty not to exchange our places for the road. Double-humped camels, marching single file in stately procession, bestowed contemptuous side-glances on us, and Chinese at their open-air breakfasts left off eating to laugh at us as we jingled past. At the North Tartar gate we met a most picturesque equestrian, apparently waiting to become a snapshot. His pony was pure white, with a mane and tail so predominant that the rest of its proportions were scarcely noticeable. The man's face was almost hidden by a huge wide-brimmed Szechuan hat, which so much took Anemone's fancy that she would have produced her stock Chinese sentence, "To shao ch'ien?" ("How much?"), had not extra violent jolting made her instead apostrophise the probably non-existent Board of Local Works.

As we passed through the suburbs out into the open country, to our joy we came upon an even-paved road. Benjamin made severe comments upon it, as he said the cost of it had taken money that should have gone to the indemnity after the Chino-

Japanese war. Instead of considering her country's liabilities, the Dowager-Empress had spent a large amount over that paved way to celebrate having reached her sixtieth year. Benjamin was even doubtful as to this assumed age. She must have been very young when she fled from the Allies in 1860 with Hsien-fêng and the Empress Tse An. He was not at all sure that she could have been sixty when she lavished money upon the celebration of that uncertain fact.

"Surely she would not have made herself out older than she really was," said Anemone, speaking from the western point of view.

Benjamin had to remind her that Chinese women are supposed to be filled with a desire for old age and its dignities, since youth is not always a period of privilege in the East.

"A good plan too," said Anemone; "the principle of hope eternal instead of premature regret. Hope on, hope ever, in fact."

We felt hopeful at any rate, for the dust had cleared, and the sun shone out bright and warm on the fields and trees in the country. We clattered through a village, and the inhabitants ran out to watch us pass in our martial glory. The Empress Tse Hsi herself can never have been favoured with keener interest than that bestowed upon Anemone and me.

At last we passed under a fine ornamental arch and rattled into the outer courtyard of the Summer Palace. We pulled up in front of a building at that time used as a "loot godown." Here the British had stored all the valuables they had found till they could be returned in safety to the Manchus. Unfortunately, before the British and Italians were put in joint occupation of the Summer Palace, the Russians had ransacked it. No less than forty clocks were said

to have been thrown into the lake, and Anemone, remembering the queer collection we had seen in the Forbidden City, suggested that we might spend the day in a worse way than by fishing for time-pieces.

We passed under some trees, and beyond them came upon blue waters sparkling in the sunshine. There were islands to our left, joined to the mainland by marble bridges. On the larger island, through the trees, rose the yellow roof-tops of a palace. To our right the lake was bordered by marble balustrades, and the Empress - Dowager's reception - rooms stood close beside the water. Above them was the wooded hill, and below them the blue lake with its edging of white marble; while a little farther on rose stately buildings on the slope of Wan-Shao-Shan, the Hill of Ten Thousand Ages. The opposite shore was green with grass and trees, and the inlets of the lake were spanned by hump-backed marble bridges. In the distance was a blue background of hills—the Hsi Shan, or Western Mountains.

One could imagine how the Empress Tse Hsi must enjoy the time she spends in that country home on the shores of Kwun-ming-hu, the lake that washes the foot of the hill of venerable title. Yet, for the first moment or two, we were conscious of disappointment. Somehow most of the works of man carry with them the sense of shortcoming. However beautiful or grand they may be, fancy can picture something more beautiful and still grander—for the ideal exceeds the real in the man-made productions. The poet, the artist, the sculptor, whoever he may be, can only seize upon few of the ideas that flit through his mind in millions. And these, once confined in the cells of his brain, lose their pristine brilliance and their power of flight, like butterflies from whose frail

wings the down has been brushed by handling. When he produces them in the sight of the world he discovers, to his despair, that they are no longer the sparkling, winged imaginations he imprisoned. How different are the works of God, with no intermediary in their production. The petal of a flower, a microscopic shell, a grassy bank by the roadside, a star-lit sky overhead, are filled with the majesty of a beauty that exceeds mortal comprehension, and the greatest height of human culture culminates in a faint perception of stupendous loveliness. And so at first at Wan-Shao-Shan the beauty of the day seemed more impressive than the beauty of the palace buildings. But by degrees we became conscious of a feast of graceful curves and angles, of golden-coloured tiles, and purity of snowy marble. Inside, too, in the rooms specially apportioned to Tse Hsi were gorgeous hangings and bright embroideries. Pilferers seemed to have paused before entering here, and luck, as usual, was attendant on the Dowager-Empress.

We went out again and walked by the side of the lake to the marble corridor that fronts the principal and most imposing parts of the palace. The blue lake rippled melodies against its marble border, while we studied the Chinese frescoes that formed a frieze beside the tops of the corridor arches, and noticed that everything was brought up to date by little glass globes which projected from the walls and announced that the covered way of the Son of Heaven was electrically lighted. It was here that Anemone said she first felt disposed to break the tenth commandment. She thought it must be an alleviation to any lot to be able to take daily exercise quite regardless of the weather, with white marble overhead, white marble under foot, and a garden on either side filled with

bowers of purple wistaria and bushes of yellow banksia roses.

A splendid archway spans the front of the main entrance. We paused under it and looked up at the buildings which towered above us. We had a vision of marble steps, gold-coloured tiles, of a great massive stone wall, and a fine pagoda crowning the summit. It was quite superfluous for Benjamin to warble that he "dreamt that he dwelt in marble halls," for the fact was self-evident as we walked up the marble steps and across the marble courts, and in and out of the different palaces which stood in a straight line, and were divided from each other by open spaces, like those in the Forbidden City. The porcelain roofs of the buildings were ornamented with fantastic figures and dragons and animals, and in the courtyards there were bronze urns, and bronze peacocks and storks holding themselves stiffly erect on marble pedestals.

Most of the palace interiors were excellent samples of the devastation that can be accomplished by looting. The greater number were perfectly bare; even the great plate-glass windows had been wantonly broken. This particularly aroused Anemone's ire, as she thought the Emperor of China should receive every encouragement in setting an example of ventilation to the many millions of his subjects who indulge so little in light and air in their own habitations. But then, as these would not be likely to be persons with any knowledge of the glass expanses of Wan-Shao-Shan, the set-back to their education was probably not extensive.

We passed through void rooms where intricate carvings here and there contrasted with the general emptiness. We climbed up the marble steps, or else walked along the corridors that also led upwards on both sides of the courtyards; and we thought how well it was that only Manchu women should be allowed into the

imperial seraglio. Poor little mutilated Chinese feet would find it hard work to mount the steps of the great stone terrace, or the narrow stairs of the pagoda, up which we toiled to the top storey, where we found such a panorama as one feels one has a right to expect from the Hill of Ten Thousand Ages. Across the flat plain lay Peking, a little indistinct in an atmosphere of dust, under which the city seemed to hide as though half ashamed of itself, which Benjamin said was what it ought to be after its recent behaviour. On the other side the Western Hills stood out clear and blue, as though they had nothing to trouble their conscience. Without them the picture would have been incomplete, as ideal scenery cannot do without mountains. Satisfaction can only be found in that which points us higher, and we always crave a sight of the hills, even though we shun the ascent and remain for ever ignominiously at the foot of them. Nearer, on the Jade Fountain Hill to the west, we could see temples, and to the east some ruins of what no doubt were once the palaces of "Yuen-Ming-Yuen," the Round and Splendid Garden. Before us stretched Kwun-ming-hu, the blue lake, with its marble bridges and island palace. Below us was a maze of porcelain roofs, a few green-tiled, the remainder all imperial yellow. Just beneath the stone terrace a double-roofed bronze pavilion, with little bells swinging from all the eight corners, made Anemone pass scornful criticisms upon my reflections on the imperfections of human attainments. Certainly the dainty bronze structure might have been an importation from Fairyland, and found no imaginary counterpart. On the crest of the hill, above the pagoda, stood a temple with a triple entrance, and a roof very specially fantastic with carved birds and beasts and dragons. We clambered to it only to find its interior a scene of desolation. The temple

appointments were rubbish-heaps, and the only incense that ascended was some smoke from a dying fire, kindled through an unsuccessful attempt to blow up the central idol in the hope of finding treasure. The poor image still reeled in his place, faithful to his supreme position and the memory of the old days when yellow-robed lamas chanted prayers on behalf of the Emperor, and the erections on Wan-Shao-Shan had been used as a Buddhist monastery. A number of the buildings were demolished at the same time as Yuen-Ming-Yuen, and when they came to be rebuilt one cannot wonder that the imperial family decided to appropriate them as palaces.

We walked down a steep path, through a small theatre, and on to the margin of the lake. Benjamin had not prepared us for the next object of interest, so the marble barge came upon us as a surprise. As Anemone said, any one could think of marble palaces, but it needed some stretch of imagination to devise a marble boat. However, we doubted whether the sea-going capacities of the marble junk were ever tested. Like a nervous swimmer we found it lying very close to the shore. It was not a motor launch, as Anemone at first expected, and so her interest in it waned. But it was a stately two-decked erection, with a canopy supported on pillars and a beautiful square massive stern. It looked more like an Elizabethan barge than a Chinese junk. We went on board to rest, and Benjamin wondered whether the Emperor ever gave tea-parties there; but as we were never likely to know Anemone wasted no thought on the subject, and instead set to work as usual to dispel all our illusions. Benjamin and I were perfectly contented with our marble seats under the marble canopy, but Anemone looked about suspiciously.

"I have my doubts of this barge," she said, and

presently, sure enough, she presented us with a fragment of paper veined to represent marble. "I told you so," she said. "You see you might just as well be in the bath-room of a tawdry villa."

It was only too true—the whole interior of the junk, marble pillars and seats, were a paper-covered sham and a delusion. But the outside, the boat itself, could bear the closest scrutiny of even Anemone's eyes and fingers, for it was really and truly made of pure white marble. After making certain of this we passed through the palace again, back to the big theatre.

Knowing how all Chinese delight in the play, we were not surprised to find two theatres in the summer residence of their ruler. Ming Huang, an emperor himself of the T'ang dynasty, is now worshipped as the patron saint of actors, so the Chinese stage has had Court sanction from the commencement. One can well believe that the seclusion of Court life makes the reproduction of other lives specially appreciated. Yet the craving to know life in its varying forms seems to be a new, occidental notion. "One half the world does not know how the other half lives" has been the axiom of past ages. Even now there remains the old-fashioned struggle to keep in sets, instead of enlarging all puny borders; and people will still take infinite pains to make their existences narrow, useless, and totally uninteresting, while all the time "the ends o' the earth" might be their portion, even though circumstances tie them down to one country or town.

Our great trial at Wan-Shao-Shan was to see it deserted and miss all view of the imperial home life. We went into the loot godown and examined the palace ornaments—the china, and cloisonné, and bronzes—but they did not help us much to realise Kuang Hsu. We lunched in the Dowager-Empress's reception-room, but

instead of Tse Hsi as hostess we had a British officer as host. Still, a strong personality leaves an imprint on its surroundings, and screens and embroidered hangings seemed to talk to us of Tse Hsi.

Most of the buildings of Wan-Shao-Shan are modern, so the old-time memories of the Forbidden City were not here to crowd in upon us, and our thoughts were able to concentrate upon the woman who has had such varied verdicts passed upon her, but is universally admired for her brain-power and vitality. We wondered whether the head was given so much opportunity for free play because the heart never interfered, for we might all accomplish wonders if we always did what was politic, with no tiresome compassion and conscience to interrupt us, and knew no higher law than our own will. Yet what a mess most of us would make of our lives eventually, whereas Tse Hsi has always known how to bide her time, and so shows that she has kept the rein of self-government,—that stupendous undertaking compared to which the management of others is paltry in the extreme. Yet there again the task is made easy when it is the head only that needs control and not a much less dignified portion of the anatomy, considered by the Chinese to be the organ of sensibility instead of either the liver or heart—in which case a good digestion may be the whole secret of the Empress-Dowager's success. For all we could tell she may really be devoted to Li Lien Ying, the head eunuch; or possibly her early love was so truly bestowed upon Prince Su Suen, with whom she is said to have flirted during her husband Hsien-Fêng's lifetime, that her power of attachment may have come to an untimely end at that prince's execution; or more likely still, that was only gossip, and she never cared for him at all. As most inner lives are sealed volumes there is not the remotest reason for supposing that any speculations will unveil

hidden truths of such a varied career as that of this formidable Manchu.

As she was not present we comforted ourselves by the reflection that the Summer Palace might perhaps be pleasanter without her. She is possibly one of those people who insist upon their own personality paralysing everybody else's—an alarming operation for those incapable of resisting, and a most boring one for those who acquiesce for the sake of peace and quiet. Still, it all depends upon the degree of charm, and the Empress Tse Hsi may be one of those for whom one would willingly annihilate oneself. Still, on the whole, we decided that it was just as well that she was not with us. We should not have been able to explore the island on the lake and its palace with such leisurely curiosity, and she might not have approved of our luxurious arrangement for quenching thirst by the way, in the shape of a Chinese who dogged our steps, staggering under the weight of a huge case of soda-water bottles, as we strolled along the broad walk by the lake and passed under a towered gate on our way to the marble bridge that led across to the island. On the broad walk we found the recumbent bronze ox, noted as one of the few really ancient treasures that Wan-Shao-Shan possesses, and which is as natural and true to life as it is venerable, in spite of an obviously modern tail that replaces the original appendage, broken off in 1860 by the Allies, who certainly proved themselves no respecters of the artistic and beautiful.

With the exploration of the island we felt that sight-seeing proper was concluded, and that we were really at liberty to enjoy ourselves. White sails dotted the lake, for a gentle breeze had arisen, and foreign officers and Chinese student interpreters had taken out boats to race.

We followed their example, with the exception of the

racing, and sailed on the lake, while across Wan-Shao-Shan the shadows lengthened, deep reflections darkened the water, and the Western Mountains grew dusky as the sun sank low in the sky. Even the new palace buildings, in the soft light of the evening, seemed to assume an old time-honoured aspect that fitted them for the summer residence of the oldest Empire of this earth. And we spoke of Kuang Hsu, and the good we had heard of him, and sympathised with Tse Hsi over the changes and chances of her memorable career. We landed at last by a marble hall beside the edge of the water, and once more walked along the marble corridor and passed the silent palace crowned by its gold-coloured tiles. No sound was to be heard except the lap of wavelets on the marble margin and the sweet notes of an Italian bugle-call. The little yellow roses flung golden petals about us, and the purple wistaria, as it swayed in the breeze, seemed to whisper of the joy and beauty of life. And we felt, whatever tragedies had taken place, whatever sad and heavy-laden hearts had passed that way, the flowers at any rate had been there as comforters, and would be in their places to welcome Tse Hsi and Kuang Hsu when the Court came back from exile. So we wished them many happy moons beside the Kwun-ming-hu, and as much enjoyment as we gained from our day at the Summer Palace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FROM TIENTSIN TO CALCUTTA AND RAWAL PINDI.

"VERY sorry, but impossible for any one not belonging to the Field Force."

This was the statement of the Headquarters Staff when Anemone and I applied for free passages on the transport that was to take Benjamin and his men to India.

We took our time over our reply, to give it more relish, and then put it interrogatively.

"Don't you remember insisting that we belonged—we *both* belonged to the Field Force?"

The Headquarters Staff had to confess humbly that their objection was annihilated, since their own words had entangled them.

So it came to pass that early one morning, when most of the inhabitants of Tientsin were still asleep, a tonga rattled to the station, and inside sat Anemone and I.

The train journey accomplished, we passed most of the day at the Indian Marine quarters, where a gardener was decorating the rather desert-like surroundings and fanning himself at the same time. Fans are taken into use and discarded at fixed dates in China, regardless of eccentricities of temperature. As a matter of fact, the seasons there are said to conform to proper Chinese order and regularity, and the heat generally commences and finishes obediently on the days prescribed for the

use and disuse of fans. Of course, if the weather can be trained into such subservience one does not wonder that the Chinese consider that there is nothing left for them to learn. In any case, that year the atmosphere was certainly of the type to provide fans with occupation, and we were not the least surprised to see the beaming old gardener fanning the flower-beds, for blossoms seemed as likely to be called into existence in that as in any other way.

It was hotter still on the shore of the Pei-ho under a tent by the new pier, and we welcomed the steam-launch which carried us out across the bar to the troop-ship.

The evening was spent slinging horses on board, and then the vessel steamed away with her swarm of two-legged and four-legged passengers. The lower decks were filled with horses and camp-followers, the upper decks with Indian officers and soldiers. The English soldiers had a small space allotted to them amidships, and Anemone and I experienced the vagaries of the ocean with the British officers on the poop, which rather resembled a menagerie, as nearly everybody had come on board provided with pets. They included Chinese canaries with strident voices, and a Chinese nightingale that fell overboard, or perhaps might have contributed specimens of Celestial singing; also Chinese dogs of all varieties, from little broken-nosed, goggle-eyed palace spaniels to the hairless rat-like creatures that are the real chow or edible dogs of China, when the Chinese indulge in canine joints, which is said to be very seldom, instead of constantly as some globe-trotters suppose.

In spite of crowded quarters everything was kept very ship-shape, and order and punctuality were sternly insisted on. We lived in conformity to bugle-calls. "Retreat" in particular used to send Anemone and me

below in a panic to dress for dinner for fear of being late, as the captain expected every one to remain standing till she and I took our seats, and the expressions of the hungry men who had been kept waiting on their feet for twenty minutes before the first evening meal we partook of can be better imagined than described. By degrees we submitted to strict punctuality as our daily obligation. The camp-followers, crouching day and night on the lower decks in meek attitudes, preached resignation to any lot. Besides, everybody on board had duties. The sowars fulfilled theirs most earnestly, and undertook some rather unnecessary ones, judging by the injunction which Benjamin overheard impressed upon a sentry by one of his Indian superiors. "When you pass another ship, challenge it twice in Hindustani and once in English, and do not allow it to approach too close." And the sentry saluted, and no doubt felt all passing vessels to be his special and onerous charge, as we steered our way to Wei-hai-Wei, Hong Kong, and Singapore—our ports of call being nowhere outside the Motherland, that Greater Britain which makes a home for her errant sons and daughters in all corners of the globe.

There was plenty of scope on board to satisfy any cravings after knowledge, and Anemone and I studied the semaphore, Morse alphabet, and sailors' knots to our hearts' content, and thereby, in Benjamin's opinion, gave a number of people a great deal of unnecessary trouble over instructing us. But our more serious study was in Hindustani; and a jemidar, one of the Indian officers, was deputed to give us lessons, and did not decline and assert himself to be a warrior and not a "munshi," as we rather feared he might. He was a tall specimen of humanity, with a fierce-looking black beard with turned-up ends that vanished under his turban, and lent force to his criticisms when he pro-

nounced our first attempts at construction in Hindustani to be "contrary to all rules of civilisation."

At night I was provided with a corner of the deck, specially set apart for my slumbers, where I could watch the moon rise with the appearance of a round, red, swollen face. A short way off a Pathan sentry paced up and down in the moonlight; and on the other side of a canvas partition the snores of sleeping Britons grunted an uneven *obbligato* to the sing-song voice of the waves. When a gale rose and the tropic sea grew obstreperous, the two little cannon that helped to manifest the troop-ship as one of his Majesty's Indian Marine vessels, bounced from their places and charged me till the Lascars ran up and restrained their zeal. When thunder-claps and the fog-horn did their best to outvie each other, and flashes of lightning and glare of lanterns showed one's bed high and dry, like an island in the midst of rushing rivers of water, the nights at any rate could not be said to be wanting in excitement, even if the days grew rather monotonous. But it was pleasanter on calm evenings to curl oneself up by the taffrail after dinner and watch Rigel blinking in the deep purple heaven, and condole with the Southern Cross for not comparing better with the Great Bear. The corner by the taffrail was the only quiet spot away from one's tangible fellows where one could be alone with the more subtle influences that so specially pervade wide expanses of sea and sky. Even there one was often interrupted. One evening it was by the chief engineer, who might have posed as the model for Kipling's M'Andrew. "Aye, aye," he said, gazing at the stars, "it's a wonderful planet we inhabit. There's never another in yon firmament with a history equal to ours." Though a bombastic, erroneous statement, the majesty of man's inheritance seemed certainly awe-inspiring, surrounded by waters silvered

by phosphorus and a brilliant star-studded sky; but that made it the more humiliating to test one's limitations in a stifling cabin where a course of fanning was needed to allow one to cope with one's clothes.

At Singapore an enormous amount of correspondence—letters and telegrams marked "urgent"—awaited us from Joseph, and contained exhortations to Anemone and me to visit him in the Native States. "If you do not," he wrote, "I'll take long leave and follow the American to England. You remember the American, don't you,—the tall girl with the small head in Japan? By the way, she isn't American. Never left England till this time when an aunt took her this trip round the world. She stopped in Kuala Lumpor two days. I met her at dinner at Carcosa, and got the R.G. to run a special to take the aunt to Kuala Kubu while I showed her (the niece) round the Lake Club Gardens, &c. If you come—well and good. If you don't—I'm off on my long leave. They're travelling slowly, stopping at places. I'll go direct and catch them up at the end. So now you know and can decide. Wire reply. Chin chin."

This missive filled Anemone with apprehension. Of all things she disliked direct responsibility, for of course, as she said, it was much more convenient to be always in a position to blame everybody except oneself. To be made the cause or the prevention of knight-errantry on the part of Joseph was more than she could take upon herself. However, a husband came in as a valuable acquisition. The statement, "My husband approves," or "disapproves," as the case may be, clinches all argument, and in itself alone makes the married state desirable. "Benjamin disapproves of my remaining," wired Anemone. Benjamin had never uttered a syllable on the subject, but that was a detail of course. As I could not make the same convenient

reply, my decisions were as numerous as the stones on which we regaled the cassowary in the Botanical Gardens. Circumstances finally settled the question, for the troop-ship was due to start again before the hold baggage could be recovered, and my boxes only emerged in time for me to sit on them as we steamed slowly past the islands, and sheet-lightning flashed farewell messages above the long, low, purple outline of coast.

Accordingly, our first greeting in Calcutta was a telegram from Joseph, "Baiklah off in wake pseudo american." This announcement was so much our first definite impression at the capital of India that it left me with very hazy recollections of the Hughli and its flat jungle-covered banks, occasionally interspersed by huts and palm-trees, and even such homely objects as hayricks, and I entirely forgot the sporting stories of tiger-shooting, sixty-three of these animals having fallen to the gun of a lighthouse-keeper, three of them shot, it was said, from the towers of the lighthouse.

It may have been only a superficial outsider's view, but somehow Calcutta did not impress us particularly as a "City of Palaces." Palaces there certainly are and numbers of finely built houses, and Park Lane is not omitted from the names of its streets. But memories of a mere two weeks' acquaintance speak to one more of a grass-covered, tree-dotted park, or, as it is called in India, the "maidan," a race-course stretching beyond, the Eden gardens, where the band plays in the evenings, and the drive on the Strand by the Hughli, which Anemone considered the genuine "India's coral strand"—the description seemed so appropriate of a lurid, reddened sky against which the monsoon mists daubed a hazy background to the ship-masts up stream. Up and down the Strand the carriages dawdled with their occupants of every tint and blend. What weird

ingredients must have been compounded to make up the mixtures of race that are now included as British citizens. And the more glaringly sallow the complexions, so much the more vividly blue the attire was as a rule.

The monsoon had only just burst. The thermometer had been 108° in the shade. Consequently there were only a few white, washed-out faces to be seen, and those unfortunates who found it impossible to get away struggled nobly to make the best of the heat. Their occupations ignored the climatic conditions, and we had no sooner landed than we were invited to a dance at the Saturday Club. We found it tempered to suit our environment. Every other item only was a dance; in between we sat out to selections of music in a lantern-lit garden, where diminutive boys were stationed to cool each heated couple with enormous fans.

As well as these fortnightly dances, fortnightly races were held some miles out, at the course at Tollygunge, a week-end paradise with a club-house and golf links and the scenery of an English park, improved upon by a background of feathery bamboos.

Sometimes we left the parts that had pretensions to making Calcutta a City of Palaces, and explored the native bazaars with their throngs of brown humanity, so unlike the independent, inquisitive Chinese who have no caste system to keep them rigidly to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them, and show their patient endurance of it by a humble expression of face. But our time for sight-seeing was limited, as Benjamin received orders that sent him across India in the hot weather to serve his country in the Punjab.

It was a melancholy journey. It began at a dispiriting hour—some time in the middle of the night. The depressed company which witnessed our departure did not tend to enliven us much. We could not avoid

leaving many blighted hopes behind us, for, shortly before our leave-takings, a vast assemblage appeared—bearers, dirwans, bhisties, sweepers—none of whom had we ever set eyes on before, and whose sole service consisted in the receipt of tips. These Subramoni was told to administer; but as the multitude had the miraculous property of multiplication and the doles were devoid of it, it was, on the whole, a wistful-eyed group that sped us on our way with melancholy salaams.

An Indian four-berthed railway compartment gives spacious accommodation. One can make one's bed and put on night array, and convert the train into a private house, if nobody else gets in. At the first stoppage, however, I was joined by a lady who brought most of her household furniture with her. Any change of seat in the carriage now entailed climbing over tables and chairs.

"It's only like travelling in a furniture van," she assured me, as she took off her hat and her toupee at the same time.

Fortunately showers of rain had cooled the air, so that the trials of a train journey across India in the hot weather did not seem so bad after all. The country was flat, but it was green and cultivated, and might have passed for some rather uninteresting tract of Europe. The temperature was bearable, and all would have gone well had not the Viceroy been so ill-advised as to come down from the hills and take a railway journey in the plains. At least this was the explanation of our suddenly being shunted into a siding, where we spent four hours gasping while the sun blazed on the roofs of the carriages, and the provision of water was useless to refresh us, as it not only turned hot but positively boiled. Of course all the train connections were thrown out of gear, and we found ourselves obliged to change at Cawnpur and spend several hours there in the middle

of the night. We dragged the tables, the chairs, a child's crib, and a few more such trifles out of the carriage, and found Benjamin apostrophising a hybrid official on the platform. It had transpired that the Viceroy was travelling in quite a remote portion of the Indian Empire, and consequently Benjamin, not unnaturally, could not see that our four hours of misery in a siding had facilitated his movements in any way. The hybrid official thought Benjamin's grievance very unwarranted. The Viceroy's special was passing somewhere through India, consequently it was unheard of that other trains should proceed undisturbed on their way. Benjamin inquired whether he supposed that when the King and Queen went to Sandringham all traffic in England was suspended during that time. The official palpably supposed that it was, so that Benjamin's dramatic query was rather wasted in effect. He had to content himself by giving orders that an engaged carriage was to be wired for, and hurried off to take beds for us at the nearest hotel.

I wanted to visit the memorial at the well where the dead and dying of the Cawnpur massacre had been heaped indiscriminately, but Benjamin said it was impracticable at that hour; and certainly, what with dreams and heat and mosquitoes, our interrupted essay in slumber made us form a sufficiently realistic notion of the bygone sufferings of those brave unfortunates.

At dawn we reassembled on the station platform in a dilapidated state, and were kept waiting a long time by the express, for the Viceroy's movements had still disorganised the whole railway. When the train at last arrived no carriage had been engaged; and when Benjamin demanded the reason why, the hybrid official said, "Because it would have been against the rules; seats can only be booked twenty-four hours in advance."

When Benjamin asked where the rules were to be found, so that they might be assimilated by an ignorant public, the hybrid official only gazed at him sorrowfully and murmured in his best English, "twenty-four hours in advance." Benjamin passed criticisms upon the results of want of competition and general slackness, and hunted through the train till he found a compartment with one solitary masculine occupant blissfully sleeping, and unsuitably attired to receive ladies unawares. He had to be roused and forced into his clothes before Anemone, our travelling companion, and I, could enter with the furniture and just avoid missing the train. Benjamin saw to the luggage, and found himself a place elsewhere.

It grew hotter and hotter after we passed Amballa, and travelled through the thirsty desert of the bone-dry Punjab. Still we were glad to have reached the country of the Five Rivers, and looked out of the windows at its mud villages and occasional forts. As vegetation was so scant even buffaloes became all-important as objects of scenery. Vultures hovered in the air, as though they knew that most of India's invaders had passed over the plains of the Punjab, and that history might repeat itself and give the same opportunities for feasting on the slain. Green parrots and showy peacocks flashed splashes of colour across the khaki monotony of dust blistering under the sun, till the great orb dropped below the horizon in a red heat of fiery rage.

As our journey consisted mostly of midnight incidents, we wound it up consistently by arriving at Rawal Pindi in the middle of the night. We clambered out over the furniture, to be met by Benjamin with the intelligence that, though Subramoni had mounted guard over the luggage, and he himself had given minute directions concerning it, everything that should have come in the van had instead been left behind. We

were bereft of our own belongings, and surrounded by our travelling companion's tables and chairs.

Outside the station a row of carts vainly awaited the lost property. Benjamin delivered them all up to the furniture in an access of disgust. We had ceased blaming the railway methods of India, and as we drove away under the trees of the cantonment we began to accuse each other as a last resource. Overhead the stars blazed in a sky that they flooded with brilliance. From the earth hot fumes rose as though from a furnace. When we came to the house everything in it felt burning, and even when bundles on the verandah had been shaken into life and commenced operations with punkahs, it was poor refreshment to feel blasts of hot air sweep over one's face. The beds were covered with mats to be cooler, but even then they felt as if a warming-pan had passed over them. I pinned a wet towel to the flap of my punkah, and sat under it panting, with drops of warm water trickling on to my head. Just then Benjamin appeared for a moment with a strip of flannel which he had produced from his dressing-case.

"Wrap this round you," he said, "or the punkah may give you a chill."

I thought eternal gratitude would be the portion of anything that could have that effect; while, as for the flannel, it was surely adding insult to injury to even suggest it as an habiliment.

The night was not noiseless. Lady mosquitoes were far too loquacious to allow it to be that. Every now and then, too, some chokidar (watchman) burst into a dismal ditty by way of frightening bad spirits, and it certainly sounded as if he ought to succeed. When one at last fell asleep, the punkah wallah also slumbered, and one awoke in a red heat and ruthlessly jerked the cord attached to his big toe. Once more

the punkah creaked and groaned, and one wondered why electrical appliances and modern improvements should not be more in general use.

"Because," squeaked the punkah, "you can't get away from climate. The plains of India breed lethargy. In spite of all the national changes, as it was in the beginning, is now, and, judging by appearances, evermore shall be in Hindustan."

I defied the punkah's croaking and fell asleep, and dreamed of a future when liquefied air will be stored in houses in hot countries, and turned on to cool rooms as conveniently as hot air is made to warm them in chilly zones. Perhaps when that time comes cold halls would let one listen unmoved to the brain-fever bird. As it was, sleep vanished with the dawn, for, though the chokidar left off singing, the demon of the hot weather got up and shrieked, "brain fever, brain fever" in wild crescendos till Subramoni appeared with the early tea. So Far Cathay became a memory, and "the long, long Indian day" took up its reign.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RAWAL PINDI, MURREE, LAHORE, DEHRA DUN.

It was indeed a long, long day. The sun got up early and went to bed late, and during the hours that it rode high in the heavens we had for the most part to stay boxed up in a house with tatties drawn down all round, so that Anemone said she felt like a bird in a darkened cage, only the experience did not inspire her with the faintest desire to sing. The box wallahs were our only visitors during those monotonous periods. They used to come and squat inside the tatties and proclaim their wares—"t-a-i-p-e, c-a-a-ckles p-i-i-l-l-s," &c.—in Hindu Cockney, except the Kashmir wallah, who had more of an Italian accent, but who was not encouraged by Anemone, on account of her own great dislike to outbursts of emotion and the Kashmir wallah's habit of relapsing into tears when his outrageous prices were ridiculed.

"Ladee Sahib have luckee face," he used to snivel. "Ladee Sahib bring poor man luck," at which point Anemone always sternly commanded Subramoni to eject him. I thought her hard upon him, as we were told that tearfulness was characteristic of his race, and that the chief object of missionaries to the Kashmiris was to try and infuse them with strength and manliness. Anemone had to allow that it was interesting that such a ladylike people should be found at

so little distance from fierce races like the Sikhs and Pathans.

Pindi society was limited during the hot weather. Almost everybody was away in the hills. However, a few devoted wives like Anemone remained with husbands whose duties kept them in the plains. These ladies used to forgather every evening and sit limply under punkahs in the Club garden. It was almost all they had energy left for; but we, having brought a reserve fund from bracing regions, used to scorn this mild occupation and scour the country directly the sun was low enough in the sky. The dry plain had its own strange fascination. On one side the snow-topped Himalayas rose up a sudden barrier, in contrast to the illimitable distance that, on the other side, faded away in a haze of dust. The cantonment was well planted, but bareness was characteristic of most parts of the country, and the trees in the park outside Pindi soon degenerated into mere bushes and scrub. Still, though it was a rather burnt-up specimen of sylvan scenery, there were pretty drives and rides through it, and occasional fairy-like ponds covered with water-lilies—a paradise for birds, which skimmed the water chasing dragon-flies. From the top of a little hill was a view over the native bazaar and the cantonment, while in the distance we could see the wide bed of the river Jhelum. The country looked just suited to wars and rumours of wars, and the despotic rule of Ranjit Singh, the one-eyed, pit-marked old Lion of Lahore. There could be no turning of swords into ploughshares yet under British sway. A host militant had to people the district, and we went by long lines of hideous barracks, and were let into the secrets of redoubts that bristled in the neighbourhood in expectation of those troops whose first snub in Asiatic aggression was instead to be given them by the little Japanese.

At Fort Misrial—Misery All, the Tommies pronounced it, with a great deal of emphasis—Anemone and I took part in the first Indian military balloon ascent. The balloons' feelings had been hurt, or at any rate Benjamin's feelings had suffered in regard to them. After having been sent to China by such a roundabout route that they arrived too late to be of any service, they had been brought across the seas to India only for one of them to be blown away in a gale, and then the only comment of the authorities had been a wish that some more gales would blow away all the others—a desire by no means encouraging to aerial locomotive enterprise. But Anemone begged Benjamin not to be disheartened, as she was anxious that he should invent an electrical aerial brougham,—she thought it would so simplify paying calls. It was really by way of soothing his ruffled feelings that she suggested our balloon ascent, and we came to the conclusion that no better panacea could be offered for the reduction of swelled heads. As the objects on the earth receded, what a pin's point we seemed to inhabit, and the bird's-eye view of our little globe brought the relative vastness of the universe more within our mental grasp. The first free run caused intense excitement among the natives, who raced below the mysterious object, which was also escorted by great flights of birds intensely bewildered by the giant aeronaut. And then the balloon went back to bed at Misrial, and we hurried home, pursued by an army of locusts, which were blown into Pindi like Pharaoh's plague, and blown out of it again almost as quickly, only leaving a few stragglers behind to chirrup for their vanished companions. After the locusts came great clouds of dust pouring into all the houses, and less easily ejected. But we bore the dust-storm like Spartans, for we knew it would cool the atmosphere. Rain followed, with thunder and

lightning, and then the temperature fell, and for a few hours the zest of life was granted us as the climatic eccentricities preached the Jesuitic maxim of good proceeding from evil.

Every now and then there was a plague of winged ants. They were worse than the locusts, for they had a miserable habit of shedding their wings and of dropping bodily into all the food at dinner-time, the hour when they usually put in their appearance, just as we were trying to forget the burden and heat of the day under punkahs in the garden. Every one dined out of doors and tried to imagine themselves cool, though the atmosphere was generally rather like that of a badly ventilated hall. Though the *al fresco* dinners had their drawbacks they were sociable in their results, as the different parties used to forgather in the road to participate in the local excitements. Anemone said these belonged to the Impressionist School. They were like Whistler's pictures, and required some explanation. For instance, she defied any one to have guessed what was occurring from the procession that passed one night when we were in the middle of dinner. We heard strange sounds, and, wondering if this could be novel music of some sort, we marched off to the road to find out. First some Indian soldiers slowly straggled past, beating on empty tin pails which produced the fantastic noises. They were followed by an English officer, very spruce in his white mess-jacket but most uncertain of his wobbley bicycle. His meanders increased as his domestic partner of large proportions pursued him down the road; and when she cried, "Johnnie, Johnnie, come back and kiss me good-night!" Johnnie promptly fell off into the ditch out of sheer agitation. He arose and remounted in wrathly silence, and vanished in the wake of the empty tin pails just as three bhisties (water-carriers)

brought up the rear of the procession with three goat-skins. As Anemone said, could any one have imagined from such a sight that a fire was raging, or rather had been, for it had burnt itself out before the empty pails arrived, let alone the bhistics with the water-skins. Fortunately, a hay-stack was all that had met with destruction; but Anemone was certain that, had the whole cantonment been in flames, the fire extinguishers would still have declined to be hustled. The procession returned in a most self-satisfied way, with increased roulades on the tin pails, just as the last post sounded its long-drawn notes, like the dirge of vanished opportunities that had crumbled back into the sands of time as irretrievably as the hay into the dust of Pindi. But the tin pails rattled a noisy serenade regardless of one or the other.

The cantonment seemed a very hybrid corner of India. We grew bored by its attractions of croquet and billiards. They were to be had on all parts of the globe where the Britisher had penetrated and laid the foundations of civilisation in his golf links, his race-course, his tennis-court. We tired of the white-walled houses with the green tatties, and preferred to drive among the flat-roofed homes of the natives, and discuss the effects upon the figure of roof-tops as the only area of exercise. However, the shapes of the upper-class ladies seemed a matter of supreme indifference, as they took no walks abroad unless covered over from head to foot with white cloths, with muslin fastened even over the eye-holes. Besides these occasional "purdah" women we passed a few of a very low caste, who walked submissively behind their husbands, and were most zealous in veiling their faces when their charms were fading. Anemone thought it must be very difficult for them to practise so much

modesty and yet make themselves useful at one and the same time. It seemed rather an anomaly to see three women screening themselves from passers-by while they publicly bathed their joint husband.

Most of the natives were of a very different type from those we had seen in Calcutta. Many in the Pindi bazaar were fair-skinned, and most were handsome, with aquiline features. It was rather a haughty crowd on the whole, and seemed to be principally occupied in getting in the way of our carriage, and suffered from deafness, like all Indian foot-passengers, who have certainly required motors as forcible arguments for preventing obstruction of the highroads.

To find one's way was another rather difficult essay, even when room was allowed one to set about it. We inquired the direction of Hurdit Singh's house from a pedestrian who was walking towards us. His only reply was to stare at us blankly. Benjamin, who cannot be persuaded from trying to hustle the East, at once grew irritated.

"Where are you going to yourself?" he asked.

"Na janta" (don't know), was all the native could tell us.

"Well, where have you come from?" said Benjamin.

"Na janta," again said the native.

Benjamin's anger subsided into curiosity. "If you have no idea where you have come from, nor where you are going to, how do you manage?" he inquired.

The native hazarded the remark that he thought his mother might know; but as there was no vestige of that lady to be seen anywhere, we did not understand how her knowledge could be of much practical assistance.

"Well! of all the consummate idiots——" began Benjamin; but Anemone interrupted.

"After all," she said, "we're all in the same

position. We don't know where we've come from, nor where we're going to, and our mothers can't enlighten us much, so really we're worse off than that old person."

The native continued his vague promenade, and as to whether he intended it to be allegorical of life we could come to no conclusion; and our thoughts were diverted by one of India's holy men who appeared just then in attire which consisted simply and solely of a coating of mud and ashes. We could not find out whether he were a "fakir," a Mohammedan holy man, or a Hindu "sadhu"; but it seemed obvious that he could not belong to the sect of the Sanyasis, the followers of Sankara, for we happened to have heard that one of their chief prohibitions was against any sort of mental agitation, and this particular ascetic worked himself into a frenzy of excitement when Anemone and I stared at him. But then as another prohibition was against speaking to or even thinking of a woman, the two must have been rather hard to combine when ignoramuses like Anemone and me made ourselves a nuisance. So perhaps he was a Sanyasi after all—the sect which an American lady was said to have joined. We wished we could come across her in her yellow robe begging her way through India; but, as far as we could make out, she had not been able to succeed as a mendicant.

At last we found Hurdit Singh's house, though we did not venture to ask the holy man the way to it. Hurdit himself was not to be seen. He and his wives lived less pretentiously elsewhere, and his show abode had generally to do the honours without him. It was built and furnished in European style, and Anemone pined to write notes at beautiful unused tables, and wondered if the carved wood and inlaid screens were ever needed, and if fires ever blazed below the gilded

mantelpiece. The gold-embroidered bed-spreads certainly did not look as if they ever expected any one to sleep under them, though the dinner-table was permanently laid, as if ready to feast a big party at that very moment when Hurdit Singh himself was probably happily eating curry and rice with his fingers.

Anemone thought it an excellent plan to leave entertaining to the table appointments, but that was perhaps only because there was a ladies' night at a mess where we had promised to dine. The mere sound of "The Roast Beef of Old England" with which the band ushered us in to dinner put us into a fever, and it was still more heating to find ourselves stationed near a bonfire after mess. The officers explained that they had not gone mad, as we feared, but that the Khattaks were going to dance, and needed every incentive to frenzy. Personally, we thought a block of ice would have been more stimulating, and certainly more becoming in its effect.

The Khattaks are a tribe of the Pathans, the fierce warlike frontier men who make such excellent soldiers under British discipline. They are quick to take offence and treacherous, or rather, as our hosts described, are very touchy on particular subjects, and consider that only blood can wipe out certain insults. A Pathan might take no notice of twenty terms of abuse, and then a twenty-first—perhaps much milder in an Englishman's estimation—might make him instantly murder his detractor. At this information I saw Anemone survey the Khattaks anxiously. She was unusually silent all the evening, and explained afterwards that, although she was not given to being abusive, she felt it best to be on the safe side when one had no idea what expressions might offend the Pathans.

The Khattaks decidedly did not look like people to



THEY LEAPT IN THE AIR LIKE THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

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be trifled with. They wore loose white trousers and long loose coats. Some had turbans; others were very unkempt, with their straight black hair sticking out round their heads like parodies of halos. Pipes squealed and tom-toms were banged while the performers did slow *pas seuls* round the bonfire, waving their arms above their heads and every now and then shrieking wildly.

By degrees the music grew louder and the Khattaks more and more frenzied. They seized curved swords, which they brandished and whirled, and they leapt in the air like the prophets of Baal, though they were too marvellously clever to cut themselves. As some fell back exhausted others rushed up to take their places, and the clash of steel joined in the banging of tom-toms, and the firelight fell on flashing blades and excited perspiring faces.

Suddenly the tom-toming ceased, and the band struck up "Father O'Flynn," followed by the "Reel of Tullochgorum," "Wapping Old Stairs," "Jingle Bells," one of the Canadian college songs, and many others that carried us backwards and forwards from one part of the world to the other, and with the tom-toms that had gone before merged the ancient history of Vedic India into the annals of the widest-spread Empire.

And now the time had come for Benjamin and Anemone to pay a visit to the little hub of British India. Never to have known Nikko in Japan is never to have known beauty, but never to have known Simla is never to have known society, never to have known life, from a certain Anglo-Indian standpoint; and to miss converting day and night into a perpetual set of kitchen lancers, as it is said to be possible to do there, was certainly to dub oneself a pariah to society—and a pariah I remained, and was galloped away

with in a tonga to Murree, while Benjamin and Anemone went to Simla.

Theirs was a long journey. Mine only occupied a few hours. The little knock-kneed ponies took the steep road at a gallop, and we raced past lines of camels, past men and bullocks resting after a night of travel, and past all sorts of strange, queer-capped pedestrians. The mountaineers were very Judaic in appearance, and looked like resuscitated characters out of the Old Testament. We only paused to change ponies every few miles, when we were surrounded by armless and legless beggars, and musicians who scraped on instruments violin fashion, and produced sounds like the skirl of bagpipes; while at one stopping-place a boy sang of the "Zakhmi Dil" (the wounded heart) with a nasal accent that spoilt the sentiment, it was so reminiscent of an American selection on the gramophone.

Sometimes our pace was interfered with by coolies at work on the roads, and worthy of taking out patents for leisurely methods of minimising labour. Some digging was being accomplished by a man who languidly inserted a spade, while a friend pulled it out by a string by way of rendering assistance.

At first the hills were bare, but as we climbed higher we came to trees and vegetation, till at last the wooded heights round Murree were reached, and the dry thirsty plains and the giant snow-capped hills were seen in vistas through forests of holm oaks and deodars. Only a few miles off, as the crow flies, was Kashmir, the paradise of the Anglo-Indian. A little beyond Murree were Dungla Gali and Changla Gali, with fresh views of the eternal snows, and their own heights covered with the brightest flowers. Here and there white tents were pitched among the trees, and in every direction there were sounds of rifle practice and firing, till the

bugles rang out, "Let 'em alone; let 'em alone," the call for "Cease fire."

The lights and shades of evening often made the plains look like the wave-swept sea they probably were in past ages; then the mists descended and tucked them away in soft, fluffy clouds till the morning. When the moon rose and gleamed on the snowy heights the mountain valleys were blotted out in inky shadows. It would have been no surprise to see elves and goblins appear and dance together in the moonbeams. There seemed no need of a "yogi" to fetch them forth by incantations; and one was scarcely startled by long piercing cries, followed by a wild tumult of yelping and yapping, and the mountains tossed the reverberation backwards and forwards, as though in play, long after the jackals had scampered away in the distance. Then again all was as still and calm as the round moon that rode across the sky, until the morning star gleamed and dawn tinted the white peaks and brought a fresh circle of beautiful hours to be spent under the deodars of the Himalayas.

Benjamin and Anemone soon left Simla, and wrote to me to join them in Lahore. And there I found them searching through the shops for household appointments of British make,—a most wearying occupation, and useless too, for at the end of the day Benjamin went through the purchases and enumerated—worthless Japanese matches, unserviceable Austrian lamps, lamp chimneys made in Belgium, French oilman's stores, German and Austrian buttons that refused to button, he said; but he was so exasperated by all the "cheap and nasty" of foreign make that he had been obliged to provide himself with, while petitions came to him from England to help the British unemployed, that Anemone thought the buttons were perhaps not given a fair test. Millionaire globe-trotters and itiner-

ant Members of Parliament are not obliged to study household economics on their imperial pilgrimages—the more the pity, no doubt.

It was a relief, though, when Benjamin and Anemone could divert their attention from shopping to the sights of Lahore—the big mosque, the marble tomb of Ranjit Singh, and the palace where we noticed a beautiful little marble building with the roof sloping downwards, in contrast to the upward curves of Chinese architecture. In another direction we found the Shala Bagh, the garden of shade, where the flowers, the water, the white marble, were a cooling refreshment after the dusty streets of the capital of the Punjab. There an old Indian soothsayer came and squatted before us, and without touching us covered the palms of our hands in some mysterious way with strange cabalistic signs, from which he read our fates.

“The Lady Sahib is woman,” he announced, “but the Lady Sahib have gentleman’s head, and the Lady Sahib have more brave heart than plenty gentlemen”—all of which sounded so complimentary that Anemone and I only regretted not being certain as to which of us these observations referred. “Both Lady Sahibs cross water,” he continued, growing slightly more explicit; “one Lady Sahib go palm country; one Lady Sahib telegram call to England by New Year.” Then, in an access of politeness by way of paying his very highest compliment, he announced: “The Lady Sahib will have twelve children and grow so fat she can no more walk.” This I insisted *could* only refer to Anemone, who at once, to the soothsayer’s astonishment, brought the fortune-telling to an abrupt close. However, as she soon decided, it was too hot in Lahore to give way to indignation, and we were very thankful to leave as soon as we could for the beautiful luxuriant country a short

way to the north of the parched plains, from which so many tourists draw their only conclusions as to Indian scenery.

We passed the Ganges and Hurdwar, one of the old sacred cities. We went through the Sawaliks, the foot-hills, and thick jungle was a relief to the eyes after the bareness of the Punjab. Then the train drew up at the terminus, Dehra Dun.

The Dun is a plateau in the North-West Provinces between the foot-hills and the Himalayas, and as we drove along the wooded roads of Dehra, past compounds full of flowers, and looked across stretches of grass-covered country backed by ranges of mountains, we decided that, as far as looks went, the Dun would be hard to beat. Yet the glory of Dehra had departed. Once it had been a great racing centre, of which tumble-down stables were all that remained in evidence, and residually Dehra looked depressingly *passée*, Anemone thought, in spite of the Gurkhas who abounded and felt equal to imparting any amount of style on their own account.

The bazaar, of course, was picturesque, with the simple life practised out of doors, right under one's eyes, to an extent that was almost embarrassing. "Painter of all things," a placard announced one man; while outside another shop was inscribed, "Short accounts make long friends, so please do not ask for trust"—a really touching petition. Indeed, the native of India is full of pathos. He is not belied by his big, sad eyes.

Our own garden at Dehra was what we appreciated most. It had been the Government botanical garden in bygone days, and it still grew the original tea bushes imported from China as an experiment to see how tea would flourish at Dehra Dun. There were beautiful lawns and a summer-house, a rose garden

with masses of pink blossoms, a plantation of bamboos, plantains and pumeloos, and an avenue of a tall kind of pointed yew trees, above which the moon sailed at night, turning the black shadows silver. We did not wonder that some one had named our surroundings "Chand Bagh," the Garden of the Moon.

We could hardly tear ourselves away to spend a few days at Mussoorie; and when we returned it was not to remain for long, as the old soothsayer's prophecies began to be fulfilled with what Anemone considered alarming accuracy on account of his final prognostications. Benjamin received orders that sent him to Burma, and I was invited to go back to Rawal Pindi to see something of the cold weather. And so Anemone and I finished our joint experiences, and wished each other a long good-bye in "Chand Bagh"—the Garden of the Moon.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RAWAL PINDI, PESHAWAR, AND JOURNEY FROM
BOMBAY TO LONDON.

RAWAL PINDI in November was very different to the Pindi we had known at the season of the brain-fever bird. The stars still blazed at night, but the clear air was almost frosty, and one found oneself jumping out of the way of the cold water at one's morning tub. In November Princess Pleasure had already awakened at the tread of the Cold Weather Prince. In every direction bands played and soldiers were drilled from the moment that reveille awoke one like the trump of doom to nothing more startling than "chota hazri" and the morning canter. Sometimes sociability was carried to the length of picnicking soon after dawn—an hour at which one does not adore one's fellows as a rule, but is inclined to feel independent and self-satisfied. During the course of the morning there were generally calls to be paid, mid-day being the unseasonable season for visiting in most parts of India. After tiffin and a rest came the turn for croquet, golf, or tennis, followed by an hour at the Club, where punkahs were now dispensed with, but the men still gathered round the table of drinks—"the place where the wild asses quenched their thirst," as the ladies called it in private. After dinner, dancing usually merged one long Indian day into another, and

then, after a short sleep, once more reveille awoke one to another energetic round of hours.

"She can dance, she can play the piano, she drives in her carriage, she is quite like an English lady," was once said of an Eurasian girl by her proud and doting mother, and I felt I was really living up to this great ideal of the feminine Briton. But it was rather a pleasant change to take the train and travel across the wide Indus, and past the Attock forts to the terminus at Peshawar. One did not wonder at its history of strife as one looked at the wild bare country that surrounded the cantonment, where gardens with flower-beds tried to bring about an armistice with rugged nature. On the north the Himalayas rose into the clouds. Close by on the west one could see the break in the Afghan hills where the Khaibar Pass led across into Afghanistan. None but fierce fighting races could people such a gaunt wilderness, which would not even produce scrub were it not for the stones that give some shade, and so allow a little moisture to fertilise the universal barrenness.

We drove out to Jumrud and took a photograph of the fort, where a lady and a little girl were helping to keep the outposts of Empire. We tried to snapshot the natives, but they were very coy and insisted on hiding their faces. Most of them were Afridis, and were quite fair, with grey eyes. Many had good faces, though a few were rather evil-looking, and their poshtins—great sheep-skin coats, embroidered in orange or yellow on the outsides—added to their fantastic appearance. We drove across the Khaibar Pass to Ali Musjid, along the winding road between the bare rocky hills, where block-houses were perched at intervals, and we occasionally caught the gleam of the muskets of the Khaibar rifles. Once or twice we met long processions of laden camels and

donkeys in charge of wild hill tribesmen and escorted by Indian soldiers. It was good to feel under their protection and realise that the "Khalsa," the fierce brotherhood-in-arms of the fighting men of the Punjab, now wielded the sword to defend the peasant's pruning-hook, and took their part in the establishment of "peace on earth, good will towards men," the ultimate mission of the British Empire, though it is likely to take some time to succeed in the native city of Peshawar, where two murders a-day were still said to be the average.

Presumably it was atavism—recurrence to original savage ancestors—that made me stipulate to be taken through the city directly I heard it had the worst repute of any in India. But the murders did not happen to be taking place just then. The streets were peaceable, though they were crowded with laden animals, beggars displaying remnants of limbs, rollicking children, fierce-looking men, purdah women draggling their white coverings through the dirt; and once we passed an old low-caste hag whose features showed traces of a beauty that could have made her the rage of a London season. We made a number of purchases at a shop whose owner ostentatiously styled himself "the only honest man in Peshawar," and gave us "bak-sheesh" for bringing him luck, by way of further establishing his self-righteousness. Then we passed out from among the flat-roofed houses and the jostling throng, of which each unit, so all important to himself or herself, was to us merely merged into the pictorial effects of Peshawar. That is what is always depressing about a crowd. It makes one feel how very, very few can rise to be landmarks, how most must be contented to be part of the general scenery. Still, that does not lessen the responsibility of either defacing or improving the landscape.

Some excitement was needed after such a tame visit to India's most turbulent city, so it only seemed appropriate on my return to find a cablegram awaiting me and the fortune-teller's prophecy fulfilled by Joseph settling my movements. He had wired, "Come England am on track pseudo american," and since he apparently could not help himself to a helpmeet without help there was nothing for it but to start for Bombay immediately. Even Agra and the Taj had to be passed by unvisited. There was only time to buy a model of the unrivalled monument to love, and hope that it would be an appropriate present to carry home to Joseph, and then wave good-bye to India and stately Bombay from the deck of a P. and O. liner.

The first person to be seen on board was the itinerant M.P., who had again been touring through the Empire with the praiseworthy object of undertaking its management from an all-comprehensive standpoint. The only drawback to this was that, as his time was limited, he had naturally to settle most of his opinions before he started, and he had not been treated everywhere to local curry and rice to burn away all preconceived delusions. I could not help remarking that I thought it would be simpler and more rational for India and the Colonies to send their own representatives to Westminster to settle imperial matters, and in this way the makers of Empire—the soldiers, sailors, civil servants, merchants, missionaries, all the imperial pioneers—could have some voice in the choice of the rulers of Empire. I pointed out the Swedish quarter-masters, and asked if beneficence to foreigners had not been the manifest result of confining the electorate principally to the villages and slums of the British Islands.

"Let them elect representatives certainly, but do not," I begged, "continue the unjust system which

leaves the makers of Greater Britain totally unrepresented."

The itinerant M.P. said he would think about it, and mentioned amendments to redistribution bills, the very sound of which remark seemed to call forth echoes of the cry, "D-i-v-i-s-i-o-n"; and as one remembered the scuttling figures crowding into the lobbies of the House—"ayes to the right and noes to the left," as if they were practising facial calisthenics—one ceased to wonder that no Imperial Parliament had been summoned to a building devoid as yet of an electrical apparatus for registering votes and saving the belated minutes dedicated to edict-making.

However, with lungs filled with the ozone of the sea, one's thoughts could not dwell for long on anything so stuffy as Westminster's debating chamber. Even the Red Sea was bracing in December, and inspired one to pace the decks and sniff the breezes. As we passed through the Suez Canal the desert looked as if it had been indulging in a snow-storm, the sand gleamed so white in the light of the moon in which the dainty lady sat, resting her shapely head on her hand, and the itinerant M.P. acknowledged that it was reserved for her gracious Majesty to have her portrait in the sky, and that the lady in the moon was a likeness of Queen Alexandra.

Searchlights stalked like spectres across the vessel's bows, and vanished in the solitary wastes that once proclaimed to Mohammed the Unity of the Creator, just as the varying heights and depths of a mighty mountain-range inspired men with pantheism, and the teeming humanity of the Indian plains convinced Gautama that men must help themselves and work out their own salvation—the threefold aspect of revealed belief that seems combined in the Trinity in Unity of Christianity. But an old Professor on board declared that

natural surroundings could have no such messages to deliver, since he was convinced of the non-existence of soul, and had, he boasted, persuaded his portly wife into the same opinion. It was not a becoming belief, for having no soul she had run to hips, the rather common fate of people who are content to be only animals.

"Sleep proves the impossibility of an after-life, for what is sleep but oblivion?" observed the old Professor, who seemed to have forgotten that the whole object of sleep is to restore one to newness of life and vigour, and that night is always followed by morning.

On that occasion the dawn broke as we steamed from Port Said, and gave us a last glimpse of the shiny East flaming with rosy brilliance. Then mists descended. The Orient was blotted out, and we knew ourselves to be back in sober-toned Europe. Stromboli did its utmost to brighten things up, and gave us a special exhibition of fireworks, which came in appropriately, as we were celebrating Christmas on board, and the itinerant M.P. was in his element standing over the boar's head making speeches.

At Marseilles a voluminous letter reached me from Joseph. The pseudo-American was at Whitehall Court with her parents, so he had taken rooms there, and I must join him instead of going straight home, as his affairs might require assistance. This much I gathered from the course of several sheets of circumlocution on the subject of a tall slim figure and a small neat head that more and more met with his approval. I thought his acquaintance with both might as well be a little more prolonged, so I wrote back that I was going the long sea-route, and that he had better meet me at the docks in London.

Almost all the passengers left at Marseilles, and could not understand my declining to follow their example.

They wished me good-bye with the deepest sympathy, evidently considering that I must be deserted of all my friends, and that I wished to travel through the Bay of Biscay for the express purpose of committing suicide. It was beyond their comprehension that any one could want a quiet time alone with the Globe, after having made such friends with it under so many varied aspects. I had to accept their condolences to avoid being rude; and, as it happened, I really had a right to them, for a lunatic came on board, and the confines of even a royal mail-packet are unpleasantly restricted when they have to be shared with a madman. It was a relief to reach Gibraltar and be joined by a nice married couple, though their presence inspired the lunatic with boldness. He now confided what he said he had kept a state secret hitherto—namely, that he was a monarch travelling incognito.

"All I need," he said to me, "is to be anchored to my throne. Will you be my anchor?"

I parried the royal command while I crossed the deck, and then evaded it by tumbling down the companion-way in my hurry.

As all hope of solitude with Nature was at an end, it seemed better to land at Plymouth. The lunatic then settled to go ashore too, so I returned to the vessel. The next minute the lunatic followed, so once more I went on board the tender. After me again came the lunatic, and before I could escape back to the steamer the gangway was pulled away, and the lunatic, the little couple and I were carried through drizzling rain to Plymouth.

When we reached the landing-stage the lunatic had disappeared, and I arranged with the little couple to go to an hotel for the night, as it was too late to leave for London. Arrived at the hotel, we found preparations had already been made for us, and we noticed that we

were received with a good deal of flurried excitement. The explanation ensued in the person of the lunatic. He bore down on us across the hall, rubbing his hands, and announced that he had let everybody know that we were certain Royalties who were expected about that time in England. We took advantage of our fictitious rank to order an early dinner in a private room, and suffered the royal disadvantage of being peeped at through the keyhole. Then we drove off to the pantomime while the lunatic was still occupied in the general dining-room. When we came back we found a note from him to say that he had gone to bed, but would be up in time to start with us for London next morning. So we restricted our hours of sleep, and got up while it was dark, and set out stealthily on our way while the lunatic was doubtless still snoring.

Merry England again, with the southerly wind and the cloudy sky that proclaimed it a hunting morning. From the train the scenery looked well groomed, so to speak, and proper and genteel compared with many of the wild expanses one had met with elsewhere in the Empire. Hedges confined the divisions of country everywhere, like conventionality marking out the grooves in the minds of correct Anglo-Saxons. Still the hills and dales of Devon looked so truly loveable one longed to get out and kiss them. We paused at Bristol and rushed through Bath, and soon reached the Thames, flowing on its tranquil, well-bred way between the woods and meadows of Goring and Pangbourne. Before long the leaden sky grew greyer than before, and the atmosphere announced our entry into the Empire's capital.

In my agitation at turning into Royalty unawares I had forgotten to forewarn any one of my change of plans, and so had anything but a royal reception. However, the little couple saw me into a cab, and I was driven through the old familiar streets till I began to

wonder if I had ever gone away and left them. All seemed so unchanged,—the hurrying crowds, the shops, the Park, the sun staring down through a veil of smoke and fog, and most apoplectic in complexion. During my wanderings Dover Street had turned into Petticoat Lane, it was true, and the great city was not without material and psychical transformations. But, as a whole, it was just the same London where one had laughed and cried in the past and would laugh and cry again in the future. The London that does not care a bit whether you come or go, and which, with human contrariness, you love for that very reason. And yet it is not without feeling, for it is the great heart that sends its life-blood coursing through the arteries and veins of Empire, and so on it must ever depend the vitality of the whole system, unless the Colonies are to roll themselves apart, amoeba-like, into petty, unimportant independencies. But there need be no fear of that if the heart-beats can be kept strong by the tonic patriotism. So it was good to be back once more in the old familiar scenes, and for a time exchange Greater Britain and Far Cathay for Bond Street shops and Ranelagh lawns and afternoon tea on the Terrace.

I reached Whitehall Court, had my boxes taken down, and asked the hall-porter for Joseph. He said he knew he was in, but he was very specially occupied. This I could quite imagine, and as I did not hanker to become a gooseberry at once, I asked to be directed to my room, and said I would see the gentleman a little later.

I was taken upstairs in a lift, and then guided by a chamber-maid to a door outside which a dozen men in top-hats and frock-coats were pacing up and down in a restless, feverish way, glaring suspiciously at one another.

The maid opened the door. "This is the room prepared for you," she said, whereupon the dozen men crowded after me into the gap, but I shut the door severely in their faces. It was agitating, after travelling safely round the world, to find oneself mobbed in a London bedroom. But I did not wonder at it as I looked about and saw that the bed, the dressing-table, the chest of drawers, the washing-stand, were all blazing with rubies and emeralds and diamonds. Necklaces were suspended from the looking-glass, muff chains hung over the towel-horse, rings were in the soap-dish, bracelets covered the toilet-trays, and pendants gleamed on the counterpane. Had I come to Golconda instead of London after all, or was I suffering from optical delusion? Suddenly a tall girl with a small head emerged from a window recess, and behind her followed Joseph. Inquiry was needless, since Joseph was there as enigma and solution respectively.

"Hullo, Griselda! Arrived already?" he said. "You haven't given me a chance to go and meet you. But good luck! You're in time to help us with the bridesmaids' presents, though Irene and I have about decided."

Bridesmaids' presents and the use of the Christian name showed plainly that he required no more help in preliminary matters; and as I looked into the face of the tall girl with the small head I saw that, as usual, Joseph was lucky.

Just then we were interrupted by a tirade at the door. There appeared to be some disagreement among the top-hatted, frock-coated gentlemen.

"Bother those chaps," said Joseph. "They wouldn't go away. I told them I'd take care of everything. I just went round to Percy Edwards' and Benson's and the Gold and Silversmiths, and the other good places,

and told them to send up selections. They seemed annoyed when they found each other here. Ridiculous! How can any one choose without comparing?" He flung open the door. "Here, you can all clear out now except one. The things we like all come from the same place, as it happens."

And so the representatives of Percy Edwards', Benson's, the Gold and Silversmiths', &c., packed up their valuables morosely, and departed with thousands of pounds' worth of jewellery.

"Is this quite usual?" asked a startled voice; and Joseph took the opportunity to introduce me to Irene's mother.

"It's a little way we have in the East," I explained—"our methods with tambis and box wallahs. Joseph forgets he's in London."

Indeed Joseph was oblivious to everything except a diamond ring, or rather the finger on which he was fitting it, so I suggested that I would not wait but would go home at once, as after all my wanderings it seemed high time for me to pose as the central figure of a family tableau.

All the same this had its disadvantages, as one grew tired of the repetition of stock adventures, unmentioned here because one could not bring oneself to repeat them a single time oftener. But Anemone said my trials in that respect were nothing compared to hers when she came home a year or two later, and was expected to give accounts of the Boxer rising and the eight Allies, and other such subjects that are by now relegated to ancient history.

"Do produce the answers on paper, Griselda," she begged. "It is not, of course, that I expect you to write anything worth reading," she added with sisterly candour. "But when I am asked whether the Japanese

were the same aggravating paragons in 1900 that they are now, and whether the Chinese are really the salt of the earth, it will be such a mercy to be able to say, 'Please, let me refer you to page so-and-so of Griselda's Globular Jottings.'"

THE END.



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